

At the Corner of the World as It Is and as It Should Be:
A Case Study on How Grassroots Organizing Challenges White Supremacy
Across Class in Southern Indiana

by

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Abstract

This research is a case study of Hoosier Action, a grassroots organization in southern Indiana, seeking political change by building power within and alongside marginalized communities. I propose that relational approaches to power building can support diverse coalitions and catalyze collective action without reifying racialized identities, subverting white supremacist patterns and behaviors. Placed within a context of increased precarity, Hoosier Action is building an effective vehicle for southern Hoosiers to engage politically around their collective values and self-interests. This is transformative work, inviting members into self-reflective practice and identity-shaping activism dependent on diverse and varied experiences with power. This is a case study built from participatory observation, semi-structured interviews, and a generic inductive qualitative model of analysis.

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Chapter 1. Introduction

Introduction

This research is rooted in two and a half weeks spent with Hoosier Action, a grassroots organization in southern Indiana, United States (U.S.) seeking political change by building power within and alongside marginalized communities. Hoosier Action fills a gap in southern Indiana left after decades of reduced access to political participation, including weakened unions and loss of social infrastructure in rural areas. While this paper focuses on southern Indiana, these losses should be seen alongside urban and rural *sacrifice zones*, “sites where capital has degraded physical environments” as elites have worked to consolidate wealth through political, economic, and social disruption of meaningful opportunities for local citizens to have a say in decisions that impact their lives (Edelman 2018, 2). As has happened in the past, economic vulnerability in majority-white communities, delinked from worker-centered vehicles for political struggle, has settled back into familiar white supremacist tropes that pit groups against one another along racial lines. In southern Indiana, as in the rest of the country, this has included a sharp increase in organized white supremacist groups and hate crimes against religious, ethnic, and racialized minorities. I spent my time in Indiana considering these dynamics. Guided by my time with Hoosier Action, I propose that relational approaches to power building can support diverse coalitions and catalyze collective action without reifying racialized identities, subverting white supremacist patterns and behaviors.

My interest in this research stems from my own background. I grew up in Bloomington, Indiana, situated an hour south of Indianapolis and two hours north of Louisville, Kentucky in the rolling hills of the Indiana Uplands. Those of us from the area often begin our conversations with Northern Hoosiers or those from outside the state like this:

Jennifer: [It’s] a funny place, Southern Indiana. I just like it a lot, though. I always feel like I’m defending it, nationally. Like, “no, It’s pretty.”

Christina: It is pretty!

Jennifer: It’s really pretty!

Christina: Yeah. That's true.

Jennifer: It's not like, dramatically pretty like the Rockies or something, but it's a pretty place.

And folks from outside the region might have an experience like this:

... you know, most people don't even think of Indiana, who aren't from here. Don't even think of it as a *state*, much less a *battleground state*. (David)

And, I don't know. Indiana suits me. I mean...it's exquisite terrain. I guess when I, I had never been to Bloomington before I moved to it. So I guess I was picturing it being more like Northern Indiana of like, you know, kinda flat, farmland and stuff. But now I'm here and it's like this beautiful rolling forest and that was a beautiful, wonderful surprise. (David)

While I could talk about the beauty of Indiana for a lot longer than most listeners would want, my more recent conversations are peppered with explanations about how our former Governor-turned-Vice President Mike Pence does not reflect my politics, or answering questions about how rural Indiana fits into the national political landscape regarding race and class. But this makes sense. The U.S. is moving through political realities that look a bit more fascist than it did four years ago, and political divisions track along multiple experiences and identities that are important to people: race, geography, class, sexual orientation, education level, and immigration status, as a few examples.

Throughout these transitions, the circumstances of poor- or working-class white communities have gained attention, in part because many are in crisis. Inaccurate associations with “Trump Country” discursively place responsibility for political crisis on poorer white communities who are assumed to be racist and backwards *because* they are poor (Carnes and Lupu 2017). Organized white nationalist groups have experienced a resurgence that coincides with a crisis increased economic vulnerability and fears about increasingly diverse demographics (Potok 2016). Social despair has been tracked by counting increased mortality due to suicides and opioid overdoses in some communities (Case and Deaton 2015).

Thesis Outline

This research follows these lines of thinking to consider how Hoosier Action's focus on building power in southern Indiana impacts legacies of white supremacy in Indiana and across the country. In chapter two, I describe some of the context in southern Indiana that informs Hoosier Action's work, and

the ways that the region connects to national patterns of precarity. This includes an introduction to Indiana history, focused on general patterns of civil rights and labor histories in the southern half of the state. In the third chapter, I review literature related to identity in Peace and Conflict Studies (PACS), Critical Race Theory, and anti-racist feminism. This lays the theoretical foundation for thinking about identity in the U.S. and allows for an informed conversation about intersectionality, whiteness, and white supremacy. In the fourth chapter, I lay out the methodology used in research, discuss limits to this project, and describe ways that the research shifted from initial proposal through final writing. In the fifth chapter, I describe Hoosier Action's power analysis and ways that their training pedagogy entails identification. In chapter six, I examine some of the ways that members are invited to respond to that power analysis, through personal and collective action. Finally, in chapter seven I conclude by discussing the implications of Hoosier Action's power analysis and pedagogy for patterns of white supremacy in Southern Indiana and describe potentials for future research and praxis.

Conclusions

While Indiana may not be first in some minds when considering political and social change, Hoosier Action's members and leaders are responding to dynamics at the center of national attention. Specifically, the lived realities across the state provide insight into political and social that have been dominant since the 2008 presidential election, and which have compounded throughout Donald Trump's Presidency. Hoosier Action's commitment to building power so that all people thrive disrupts the racialized and classed divisions that contribute to this environment. They organize large numbers of Hoosiers to reengage political leadership around political and economic issues at the root of social division. The next chapter describes this context. While it does not address every issue at play in southern Indiana, this context gives a sense of the layered political and economic issues that have given shape to the region in the past three decades.

Chapter 2. Context

Introduction

This chapter focuses on the current political context in south central Indiana. It begins with an analysis of job and union loss over the past two decades, and relies on precarity theories (Standing 2011) to analyze how these job losses connect to unpredictable political and social dynamics. I summarize Joseph Varga's (2013) writing on worker precarity in three Bloomington-area manufacturing jobs: GE (appliance manufacturing), Indiana Limestone (extractive industry), and Printpack (High Tech Manufacturing). Varga's case studies clarify how southern Indiana has been impacted by neoliberal global and national patterns since the 1980s. From there, I discuss how state policies, like preemption legislation, have compounded precarity across communities, encompassing education, in particular, as well as access to public health support in the context of the opioid crisis. I describe the closing of Stinesville Elementary School, a high-performing school in a small southern Indiana town, as an example of how community resources beyond job losses are degraded by precarity and decades of processes that disconnect local citizens from decision making authority. I describe the resurgence of organized white nationalism in the region as a predictable response to precarity given historical patterns. This allows for a brief discussion of how Hoosier Action provides an alternative narrative in the midst of precarity that does not rely on white supremacist patterns.

Altogether, I clarify how southern Indiana has been shaped and changed by the global and national deference for neoliberal policies, which have degraded mechanisms for citizen engagement that had been secured over decades of political struggle. However, this chapter does not account for every factor that contributes to deepening precarity. In particular, I do not address voter disenfranchisement, reduced investment in public health and increase in maternal mortality, the near total lack of access to existing political representation, or the privatization of the public university system and related unaffordability of Bloomington's housing market. Each of these topics, and more, would provide a different and important perspective on precarity in southern Indiana and would clarify Hoosier Action's impact in the region.

Changes in working-wage union jobs in South Central Indiana

Joseph Varga's (2013) work on precarity in south central Indiana clarifies connections between generational job loss and realignment of working class communities' political affiliations. For Varga, precarity is "understood as generational insecurity combined with an unmoored politics that produces an unpredictable situation of class re-alignment and political reformation" (431). His work applies global and national economic trends to job losses in the Bloomington area, and offers a first step to understanding how that precarity contributes to social and communal vulnerability.

Varga relies on Guy Standing's (2011) seven areas of job-related security to analyze how increasing employment vulnerability connects to social and political instability: labor market security, employment security, job security, work security, skill reproduction security, income security, and representation security. Each of these dynamics is interrelated and dependent on the others. If one is weakened, the others become vulnerable. Each type of security was won through various worker struggles for agency within the workplace, while workers had secured enough influence and power to influence their roles and rights through unions, or through political representation by electing individuals willing to advocate for them. Oftentimes, political representation relied upon union representation and organizing.

Varga's case studies highlight how Indiana, which had the third highest percentage of unionized workers of any state in 1964, had changed enough to pass statewide Right to Work legislation in 2013.¹ Southern Indiana "...contained a sizable, somewhat militant, union movement that achieved higher wage and benefit levels than non-union counterparts in the bordering southern states" (434). Kenneth Neil Cameron was an English professor and Bloomington Federation of Labor organizer from 1940-1948. His memoirs hint at the "somewhat militant" character of a Bloomington bus drivers strike:

As I arrived [at the picket line] a bus was approaching the line, whereupon the pickets ambled to one side of the bus and putting their hands under it and pushing with their shoulders began to methodically rock it back and forth. When the rocking reached a precarious angle, the driver

¹ 40.9 percent of nonagricultural workers in Indiana were represented by unions in 1964, a rate just lower than Michigan (44.8%), and Washington State (44.5%). In 1984 that percentage had shrunk to 25.4% of nonagricultural workers, and to 15.7% in 2000 (Hirsch, Macpherson, and Vroman 2001).

leaped out and ran for it, whereupon the pickets let the bus down and continued their picketing. (Filardo 1995, 615)

Indiana sustained many of its industrial or manufacturing jobs through the mid-90s, fifty years after Cameron organized in Bloomington (Varga 2013). By then, Indiana was experiencing the impact of weakened unions, seeing increased job losses, and experiencing less security in the workplace overall alongside plant closures, privatization, and increased corporate tax abatements. As a result, generations of workers have experienced increased instability. Whereas in the past, unions would have been strong enough to organize and secure better conditions, current workers have only known weakened unions that cannot promise the types of security they had built in the past. Without a strong relationship to unions, the period of deindustrialization in southern Indiana brought the region into political realignment, moving away from Democratically-aligned unions formed after FDR's New Deal, to a less predictable political engagement severed from quality of employment and the means to achieving such quality.

General Electric (GE) built their side-by-side refrigerators in Bloomington. They were one of a handful of manufacturers on the city's west side and one of the largest employers in the area. In 1985, they "employed over 6000 union members" (435). As the company lost market prominence, beginning around 1997, GE began moving manufacturing operations to regions with less expensive labor. With fewer jobs in the Bloomington plant, and with various assembly processes dispersed across distance, more workers were placed in single assembly line positions and had fewer opportunities to transition vertically or laterally within the company. The union weakened as jobs were cut overall and more remaining jobs was still geographically distant from one another, reducing opportunities for solidarity organizing. Without stronger union numbers, it has been difficult to sustain the successes of previous negotiations, including losing a significant training program. The program subsidized employee training at Indiana's community college network, and targeted women and minority workers. Such training would have helped mitigate the ongoing impact of historical segregation on these workers' access to more skilled positions. Employees at GE Bloomington were also pressured into less secure contracts after employees at GE Louisville made certain concessions to maintain jobs, there, effectively pitting

workplaces against one another in a race to insecurity. Altogether, the few workers still at GE at the time of Varga's writing in 2011 were a generation or more of workers with little union representation and newer workers who could not rely on the jobs their parents had, all of whom entered the job market with fewer transferrable skills due to the lack of training that had come with the training program or simply working more than one position on the factory floor. Not only did union loss mean they had less secure jobs within the workplace, they had fewer transferrable skills outside of GE and in a changing marketplace.

In 2010, Resilience Capital Partners (RCP) bought Indiana Limestone. The new management has increased safety risks, jeopardized rights secured by earlier union negotiations, and reduced confidence that future generations will have work, even less secure work, in the quarries. "Equity capital companies have found the old family owned quarries, with their fixed sources of material, aging, and expensive equipment, and skilled yet not too highly paid workforce, as prime targets for acquisitions, mergers, restructurings, and resales at profit" (438). Unionized Indiana Limestone workers had previously secured significant control over operations in the quarry, including the time it took to complete various tasks and related safety measures. After the RCP purchase workers reported increases in pressure to speed up their work, which increased safety risks, and "...a further increase in confrontational behavior from management" (439). The company entered negotiations with workers, in which they suggested changing seniority rights, discipline procedures, and reducing excused absences as well as "...to do away with meetings of the union-management safety committee, which met regularly to deal with and update shop-floor safety and work procedures" (439). After negotiations failed, workers went on a two-month strike in November 2011, ending with an agreement imperfect for both sides and concern over these ongoing issues with the new company, Indiana's new Right To Work law, and increases in newer technologies displacing people from jobs. "Several workers ... expressed serious doubt that their children, the next generation, would work in the limestone industry, or, if they did work in the [limestone] 'belt', that they would not be able to maintain even the marginal standard of living available to them" (440).

Printpack is a high-tech manufacturing company that uses “...advanced computer technology and technologically sophisticated processes to produce innovated or ‘next generation’ products” (440), for plastic and chemical-based food packaging. They represent one form of newer employment in the manufacturing sector following the economic recession. Printpack, based in Atlanta, opened a new factory in Bloomington with 150 new jobs by purchasing an existing packaging plant and turning it over to manufacture their projects. That former company, Independent Packaging, had been granted a 10-year tax abatement from the City as leverage to keep the company, and jobs, in Bloomington. Printpack maintained this agreement and tax abatement. In 2009, Printpack announced that it would close the old facility and purchased land to build a new, state of the art production facility in another area. During the move, Printpack told the City that they planned to move production to a cheaper labor market if the City did not agree to new tax abatements and incentives. The threat, even in the context of Printpack’s active and ongoing investment in the new plot of land, was enough to sway the largely Democratic City Council, even as the city had concerns about the environmental impact of Printpack’s products and processes. (441)

Since the late 1990s, Indiana’s political leadership has worked to present a ‘business friendly’ reputation in hopes that new employers will come to Indiana and existing employers will stay. Tax abatements are one incentive that the state uses, as is increasing privatization of public services – particularly education – and capping property taxes in general. These policies shift the tax burden that would have been covered by corporate taxes onto individuals and families through increases in sales taxes and cuts to social services that become unaffordable under reduced tax revenue. In addition, the environmental impact of Printpack has not been studied, a concern that Varga notes is particularly poignant given that the initial facility was across the street from a declared superfund site. (442) In addition, trading tax abatements for jobs through such a publicly contentious process does not necessarily provide politicians with the benefits they hope to receive after saving jobs: “When companies like Printpack exert pressure on local councils, particularly during hard economic times, the public perception

that corporate power trumps the public interest can be magnified, leading to political apathy, shifting political allegiances, and even political extremism” (442).

Each of these examples offer insight into the social impact of job loss in southern Indiana, a region with a history of rich labor organizing and some consistent commitment to workers’ stability. From loss of jobs to changes in manufacturing, privatization, and ‘business friendly’ policies, generational gains for workers since World War II have been degraded through decades of corporate efforts to shift processes in favor of growing profits. This has unmoored political affiliations that were often worker-centered and aligned with union organizing.

Without strong unions within the workplace, workers experience less security. As union engagement becomes a weaker link between workers and the political process, not only is there less support for worker-friendly policies yet insecurity ripples throughout smaller communities. Younger workers leave to find jobs elsewhere, and funding for schools and public health, for example, are cut over time. Precarity offers a helpful lens through which to connect job loss to the social and political changes taking place in southern Indiana.

As the steady erosion of labor market securities has dispossessed workers of these same workplace rights, older workers seek new forms of political allegiance, and newer members of the working class, deprived of the stability of good-paying, stable manufacturing work, join the new precariat, piecing together work, family, and community under pressures never faced by previous generations. With this new precarity come new political alliances, unmoored from the maintenance of labor rights characteristic of the New Deal coalition and the Fordist model of accumulation. The most obvious political manifestation is the rise of working class participation in movements such as the Tea Party, and in the overt hostility expressed toward the national Democratic Party by former unionized wagedworkers (Varga 2013, 443–44).

Hoosier Action enters this context to support power-based organizing in areas where union membership has declined and allegiances have shifted. Union loss meant significant weakening of local communities’ abilities to meaningfully engage political decisionmaking processes because they were a primary vehicle for engagement. Other simultaneous processes, including state-level preemption legislation, also remove authority from local municipalities to make decisions in particular issue areas. In a context where political allegiances are shifting, Hoosier Action invites workers back into the political

process to envision what life can be like in this new context, and to regain some of the meaningful political power that they previously had gained:

I just feel like everybody deserves to have something they can join to fight for the things they care about and there's very few things that people have to join anymore ultimately, people in you know – wherever – if there's like a toxic dump being put in next to their house and they need to be able to join something and fight for it ... that will be there. Or they're schools' closing or like they, their rural hospital's closing. ... [W]hatever the things are to be able to shape and determine their own lives (Jennifer).

Preemption Legislation

If declining unions left a gap in workers' ability to meaningfully engage the political processes impacting their lives, preemption legislation deepens that gap. Indiana's General Assembly has passed state-level legislation that bars local governments from increasing the minimum wage in local jurisdictions, requiring paid (sick, family and medical) leave, regulating ride sharing services, and banning plastic bags (Dupuis et al. 2018). Reflecting a pattern of preemptive state-level activity across the country, these policies are implemented by the Republican state legislature and inhibit many goals of local, often democratically-leaning urban areas. Rather than advocating to politicians who are directly working and living in the community, and who would be impacted by these issues, advocates must engage state-level, increasingly partisan politicians to regain authority to act.

In the late twentieth century, tobacco industry lobbyists encouraged state-level legislation that set policy for where smoking could or could not be prohibited, and which required local legislation to be consistent with state legislation. Later, the National Rifle Association successfully lobbied for state-level legislation that reduced cities' ability to regulate firearms within local jurisdictions. Once enacted, these types of policies most often nullified any local legislation that conflicted with the state-level legislation, and barred local governments from passing new legislation on the preempted issue (L. E. Phillips n.d.). While much of this can be understood within a long-standing tension between state legislatures and city governments, the changing content and nature of this current, highly partisan political moment is unique: “The legislatures seem fraught with open hostility in a way they haven't been in the past. Legislatures

aren't just holding up urban requests these days; they're preempting cities from taking action on a whole range of major subjects" (Ehrenhalt 2017).

More recent legislation coincides with increased partisanship patterns, specifically as more statehouses are run by majority-Republican lawmakers and democratically-leaning voters clustered in urban areas. Preemption, in this context, can heighten political tensions as Republican-led statehouses deny Democratically-led local municipalities certain options for political action² (L. E. Phillips n.d.). In this way, preemption legislation connects to identity and existing social tensions. These policies impact lives along entrenched lines of political, gender, geographic (rural/urban), ethnicity, and class affiliations. They connect to areas of life that are immediately impactful for communities, including by increasing vulnerability for already-marginalized groups, as may be the case for gender non-conforming individuals and their communities. In their research on what factors make state preemption of city legislation more likely, Gamm and Kousser (2013) found that the most prominent factor was whether or not delegates from the same city agreed with one another, a difficult outcome for larger delegations. In addition, delegates who introduced city-level legislation experienced patterned support or opposition depending on the demographics of those they represented: "When the city's population was largely foreign born, its elected representatives suffered from a nativist reaction that helped to sink their local legislative agenda" (Ehrenhalt 2017).

Preemption policies are one aspect of a national pattern in which political affiliation aligns with multiple expressions of deeply-held identity positions and experiences. They also reflect the difficult work of governing in large, diverse communities. Diverse municipalities, like large cities, have to negotiate local policies that respond to diverse individuals who settle within their limits, including newcomers or LGBTQA+ individuals, especially in the face of state or federal inaction on related needs

² One of the most prominent pieces of preemption legislation was North Carolina's 2016 "bathroom bill", N.C. H.B. 2, which required that people use bathrooms that align with the sex they were assigned at birth. In addition to removing city's ability to expand civil rights for the gender non-conforming individuals, this bill denied local governments the authority to increase the minimum wage within their jurisdiction above the state-level minimum wage (Phillips, n.d.).

(Riverstone-Newell 2017). If federal legislatures are not active on issues of importance to these local communities, local government has offered opportunities for innovative change (L. E. Phillips n.d.).

Partisan tension is compounded by the punitive nature of more recent preemption legislation. Rather than nullifying existing contradictory legislation, recent legislation can punish local municipalities for legislating on preempted issues. This can include shifting state funds away from or fining local municipalities³, fining individuals within local government or even removing them from office. Denying municipalities state when “thirty-two percent of a city’s revenue generally comes from the state” can severely limit the ability to govern at all, and such extreme punitive measures can freeze municipalities’ will to legislation on the issues at hand at all (L. E. Phillips n.d.).

Property Tax Caps and Organizing Under Preemption

In Indiana’s case, preemption legislation sits alongside state-level limits on property taxes, which pay for basic services like education. In 2010, the Indiana General Assembly capped property taxes for private homes at 1 percent, for rental properties or farmland at 2 percent, and for commercial properties at 3 percent. As mentioned above, this was part of Indiana’s effort to make the state more ‘business friendly’ (Schnitzler 2006). Typically, Indiana schools receive two-thirds of their funding from the state and one-third from property taxes. While state-level funding pays for costs like salaries and staff at schools, property taxes cover capital projects, technology upgrades, transportation, and paying off debt. Since the tax cap was implemented, Indiana has also required that schools pay off debt before investing in capital funds. The losses in income are significant. In 2013, alone, Indiana public schools lost \$245 million because of the property tax cap (Stokes 2014). By 2010, “Wayne Township Schools [on the west side of Indianapolis] lost 1.7 percent of its budget, forcing the closure of summer schools and in 2008, the Indianapolis Public Schools lost \$10.8 million of its \$553 million budget” (Strauss and Burris 2018).

³ For example, the Texas “bathroom bill”, which requires bathrooms to be used according to a person’s biological sex fines the local school board between \$1,000 to \$1,500 for the first violation and \$10,000 to \$10,500 for the second, with each day counting as a separate violation (L. E. Phillips n.d.).

The only way for cities to increase property taxes is through a public referendum. While cities have seen some success with these votes to voluntarily raise property taxes, they are more likely to be successful in wealthier districts where voters have some level of flexibility with their wealth (Herron and Fittes 2017). In the May 2018 primary election, residents voted to approve all 12 referendums to raise property taxes to increase education funding (Heinz 2018).

For Hoosier Action, some of these preempted topics in Indiana's context are a barrier to their ability to organize issue-based campaigns. Since much of the preemption legislation in Indiana is rooted in the Republican majority statehouse, changing preemption laws would require significant shifts in how Republican lawmakers decide on these topics, or changing the party make-up of the statehouse altogether. Without this type of change, decision making authority on topics of concern to Hoosier Action rests with legislatures who are less closely accountable to Hoosier Action members.

This is particularly true of Hoosier Action members in Bloomington, which is one of the only consistently and strongly democratic cities in southern Indiana. Many participants in this study described how flipping the statehouse from Republican to mixed or Democratic leadership was closely connected to their hopes and fears:

My fear is that we're not gonna be able to break the Republican hold on the statehouse, and that's gonna continue to push policies in place that are going to ... continue to hurt our community. And limit our ability to have local say in what happens. Bloomington is really a target for a lot of state legislation, like [we] can't have solar panels that make you money, can't do inclusionary zoning, can't annex in parts of the county. Like, those things are decided deliberately to hurt us. So I'm worried about that.

When you go to the state house to do anything and you say you're from Bloomington, [they're] like "yeah right, whatever." We get this all the time (Sarah).

Hoosier Action works to build campaigns that impact people's lived realities. This is easier to do by working on a topic like minimum wage, for example, which is obviously connected to a direct change in a person's life, and from which a clear line can be drawn to their ability to pay bills, feed their family, or experience more time with loved ones. Preemption bills mean that Hoosier Action would need to successfully organize campaigns at the statehouse and change state standards before it can see local change on preempted issues. This is a much more difficult job than advocating to a local city council or

school board. It also requires individuals seeking change in their own region of the state to advocate effectively to representatives of districts outside of that region. Finally, it means asking legislators to step away from the party line.

Indiana Education Reform

In 2011, under Governor Mitch Daniels, the Indiana General Assembly approved a limited voucher system, making 7,500 vouchers available to lower-income families whose children had attended at least one year of public school. This policy was based on support for school choice, theorizing that families attending lower-performing schools could apply for a voucher to send their children to higher-performing private schools (E. Brown and McLaren 2016). Advertising campaigns highlighted inner-city youth of color and claimed the program would offer their families better education by subsidizing tuition at private schools of their choice. The bill also offered tax credits to parents who home-schooled or sent children to private schools, and expanded the eligibility for charter sponsors, meaning more types of educational institutions, including religious schools, could accept state voucher funding (Strauss and Burris 2018).

In 2013, then-Governor Mike Pence expanded the program by removing limits to the number of vouchers available, the cap on income for eligible families, and the requirement that a student first attend a public school. This expansion meant that 60 percent of children in Indiana were now eligible for vouchers. Participation grew from 9,000 to 19,000 within one year. By 2016, 52 percent of voucher recipients had never attended the public school system (E. Brown and McLaren 2016).

In Indiana, the vast majority of schools that participate in the voucher program are religious institutions, which have fewer lines of accountability to local communities. They have no publicly elected school board, nor are they required to abide by state or national education standards and can discriminate enrollment based on a number of factors, including religious background and whether or not a child lives in a home with same-sex parents, for example (Klein 2017).

Educational institutions already suffered from insufficient funding. The economic recession had already reduced property values, consequently lowering property taxes and revenue from that source. To deal with the state budget deficit caused by the tax shortfall, then-Governor Mitch Daniels approved a \$300 million cut to the state's education budget. Public schools were "hit four times: losing money from the massive state cut, from property taxes, from plummeting property values during the recession and from shrinking enrollment" (Herron and Fittes 2017). Indiana University Professor Chris Lochmiller describes the impact of these policies as a 'death spiral', in which schools cut programs and salaries to reduce spending, which reduces the quality of education for students, which encourages students to enter the voucher program and leave, which in turn reduces funding. Adjusted for inflation, Indiana teachers' salaries, which are paid for by state funding rather than taxes, were 16 percent lower in the 2017-2018 school year than the 1999-2000 school year (McCollum 2018).

Overall, Indiana education faces an unstable future. Local school districts can override the cut to property taxes through a local referendum, asking the community to voluntarily increase their taxes to pay for school needs. In rural areas that experience higher rates of poverty, including one Scott County school district, it is harder to pass referendums, meaning that areas with already-lower property taxes are less able to choose their way into financial stability. While "backpack funding", which attaches school funding to individual students rather than a district, may in theory simply move funding to where students are attending, it contributes to an unstable financial context that is difficult to predict and makes basic operations more difficult for public school districts. It also reduces support for long-term public education infrastructure, sending funds to private schools that do not necessarily have better outcomes, and which have fewer incentives to remain in a community for generations.

Should these private schools funded by public dollars close, it is not a given that the existing public school infrastructure will still be around to educate Indiana children. Some school districts are financially health, including where referendums have been successful (Herron and Fittes 2017). However, the broader systemic impact to Indiana's public school system means that not all communities will have access to quality education for the long-term. As districts consolidate buildings, reduce staff and

teachers, or cut salaries, rural schools are closing. Parents transport children further to get to school, uprooting the social, community-building benefits of local schools.

When Stinesville Elementary closed to reduce capital costs (also paid for by property taxes), journalists commented that much of the feedback during a public questioning period with the school board focused on losing community, while board members pointed to low enrollment as a reason for needing to close (Haggerty 2017). Superintendent of the Richland Bean-Blossom School Board, Mike Wilcox said:

I get the heartfelt, sentimental side of this. I grew up in quarry town like Stinesville. It was the heart of the community. People have asked me, Do you understand what closing a school does to a small town? Yes, I understand. Nine out of ten small towns whose schools close dry up. That makes this agonizing..." (Robinson 2017).

A former quarry town, Stinesville's attendance had shrunk along with the town, itself. However, the elementary school remained the highest scoring school in the district: 74.4 percent of students passed both English and Math tests. With the voucher program's expansion, some Stinesville families chose to send their children to private religious schools. By the time the school board voted to close Stinesville Elementary in 2017, there were 148 students enrolled. In 2013-2014, 15 children used vouchers in the district. By 2016-2017, there were 41. While these are small numbers, they make up a large percentage of the Stinesville student body and budget. Since the school district receives approximately \$5,700 per student, the transfer of 41 students to vouchers removes over \$200,000 from the school's budget. In the same time period, 100 students from the district transferred into a new charter school in neighboring Ellettsville, another approximately \$342,000 loss attached to students who transferred, where 37.4 percent of students passed both English and Math (Robinson 2017).

The Indiana Coalition for Public Education – Monroe County (2017) highlights how the racialized discourse around school transfers within the voucher program is related to Stinesville's closing, a majority-white, rural community:

Nobody is drawing connections between this moment and Indiana's school choice program, and why should they? Wasn't that about failing schools? Wasn't it about black and brown urban children?

While children in urban schools are most impacted by the property tax cuts, “Of the 47 public school districts in the Indianapolis area, 11 are expected to lose at least \$1 million by 2010. ... IPS Superintendent Eugene White said he’s disappointed that urban schools will see the greatest hit. If the impact had been more profound on the suburbs ... the hue and cry would have been louder” (Schnitzler 2008). While this may have been true at the time Indiana voted to approve the tax cuts, Stinesville’s experiences reveal how racialized discourses and cuts to or privatization of social services eventually impact everyone. White is quoted: “Our children are not to blame because they happen to be in a district with a lower assessed valuation and higher tax rate than some of the more affluent areas of the state. There’s no equity in this, and we think it’s totally unfair” (Schnitzler 2008).

The American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC), currently offers a framework policy based on Indiana’s education reform on their website so that advocates and legislators can implement something similar in their own states (American Legislative Exchange Council 2011). Betsy DeVos, who has deep ties and investment in Indiana’s education privatization, is now encouraging similar policies nationally in her role as Secretary of Education (Strauss and Cimarusti 2018).

Deaths of Despair and Opioid Use in Southern Indiana

The combination of marketplace changes, state-level policies, and education reform offer some insight into how national and regional patterns negatively impact Hoosiers’ ability to meaningfully engage in decisions that impact their wellbeing. The dramatic changes and precarity for white communities have been connected to increased suicides and overdoses within these communities, nationally, particularly economic distress. For example, mortality related to “drug and alcohol poisoning, suicide, and chronic liver diseases and cirrhosis” is increasing faster for this particular group than any other⁴ (Case and Deaton 2015, 15078). The growth in mortality is “driven primarily by ... those with a

⁴ It is important to note that while mortality rates are rising more quickly for poor- and working-class white Americans than for other groups, mortality for African Americans and Hispanic Americans is still higher, overall (Tan Chen 2016).

high school degree or less” (Case and Deaton 2015, 15079). The most economically distressed counties in the country also voted more strongly for Donald Trump in the 2016 presidential election (Monnat and Brown 2017). A 2014 study of increased suicide rates among individuals ages 45-64 during and immediately following the Great Recession also found that, in areas where women were strongly engaged in the labor force, male and female suicide rates were similarly impacted (J. A. Phillips and Nugent 2014).

While Ohio and Kentucky have higher rates of death from illicit opioid use, the section of Indiana that is sandwiched between the two states, Southeast Indiana, has also received attention. Scott County, which is partly included in Indiana’s 9th Congressional district, sits close to the Ohio and Kentucky borders. In 2015, it was home to 4,200 individuals, 181 of whom were diagnosed with HIV that year by the Indiana Department of Health Services (Conrad et al. 2015; Gross 2016). Of those diagnosed, 108 reported injecting opioids and sharing needles while doing so. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), described opioid injection in Scott county as “a multi-generational activity, with as many as three generations of a family and multiple community members injecting together” (Conrad et al. 2015). The CDC report draws a stark picture of what life in Scott County is like, connecting it in tone to Case and Deaton’s work on despair within certain white communities:

Like many other rural counties in the United States, the county has substantial unemployment (8.9%), a high proportion of adults who have not completed high school (21.3%), a substantial proportion of the population living in poverty (19%), and limited access to health care. This county consistently ranks among the lowest in the state for health indicators and life expectancy. (Conrad et al. 2015)

The crisis forced then-Governor Mike Pence to declare a state of emergency in Scott County, which allowed him to increase funding to treatment and support services, despite his being personally ‘morally opposed’ to needle exchange programs (Stuppelbeen 2018). The 2015 legislation coincided with national scrutiny of the crisis, critiques of Indiana’s underfunded public health infrastructure, and lack of access to treatment. Rich and Adashi (2015) summarize the context:

What happened in Indiana was predictable and avoidable. Ranked 47th in health program funding and delayed in the expansion of its Medicaid program pursuant to the Affordable Care Act, Indiana has been hard pressed to extend basic health care services and reduce its uninsured rates.

Scott County ... has recently been rated last in the state on health outcomes. Scott County has a long history of unemployment, poverty, and generational addiction. In addition, Scott County has been within an HIV testing center since early 2013 when the sole provider – a Planned Parenthood clinic – closed (24).

Reducing services to Scott County over a number of years may not have caused the opioid crisis, directly, but it certainly contributed to the depth of the epidemic.

Even with this bleak picture, Indiana as a whole actually ranks slightly under the national average for opioid-related deaths. In 2016, the national rate of deaths due to overdose was 13.3 per 100,000 people, while in Indiana that rate was 12.6 per 100,000. This rate has gone up drastically from 2008, when the rate was 5 per 100,000, or from 2000, when the rate was 0.7 per 100,000 (National Institute on Drug Abuse 2018). Some counties have had success with the opioid crisis. In Clark County, for example, opioid overdoses have reportedly shrunk by half since 2016. However, Clark County Health officer Dr. Eric Yazel has warned that he sees an increasing number of patients seeking help for methamphetamine use rather than opioids (Rickert 2018).

Understanding how recent economic disruptions and the growth of precarity connect to racialized and classed social divisions in southern Indiana requires examining how these dynamics have been constructed in the past. Looking at Indiana's early racialized history offers some insight into how racialized relationships have been constructed over time. This, in turn, highlights how Hoosiers in the south have made sense of race and class, the relationships between them, and the kinds of storylines imbedded in southern Indiana that are easily available for Hoosiers as they try to make sense of current growing precarity.

A brief discussion of Indiana's early racialized history

The first residents of what would become Indiana were the Miami, Shawnee, and Potawatomi peoples. French settlers arrived in the area beginning in the early 17th century. As European settlers in the East pushed further inland, more Aboriginal groups moved through the area, and the Beaver Wars, which ended in 1701, displaced many. (Indiana Department of Natural Resources n.d.). Some of the French

settlers, particularly in Vincennes, Indiana, were slaveholders, and the region's earliest known black inhabitants were enslaved individuals in that area. The British colonial government gained control of the land at the end of the French and Indian War in 1763, and they maintained French property rights, including with regards to slavery. Slavery was sustained before and during the American Revolution, under control of the Virginia government (Finkelman 2015).

Slavery was outlawed in the region once it was included in the Northwest Territory of 1787. However, "Throughout the territorial period, white settlers held blacks as slaves or as servants under what amounted to lifetime indentures" (Finkelman 2015, 72). This practice was not effectively challenged until after the statehood and the Indiana State Constitution was passed in 1816. Throughout the late 18th and early 19th centuries, slaveholders in the territory and those who moved into the region during this time simply forced their former slaves into long-term indentured servitude contracts, and settler communities continued trading enslaved people throughout the period.

Indiana's first state Constitution adopted upon statehood in 1816 stated in Article 8:

as the holding any part of the human Creation in slavery, or involuntary servitude, can only originate in usurpation and tyranny, no alteration of this constitution shall ever take place so as to introduce slavery or involuntary servitude in this State, otherwise than for the punishment of crimes, whereof the party shall have been duly convicted.

Despite such strong language, Indiana maintained the institution of slavery and indentured servitude throughout the antebellum period even though the legislation governing the territory outlawed it. Paul Finkelman (2015) describes the 35 years after statehood in 1816 as building "a legal structure that was enormously hostile to free blacks and solicitous of the rights of slave owners," which sustained this environment up through the writing of the second state Constitution, in 1851. Finkelman describes that document as "more hostile to free blacks than the fundamental political document of any other antebellum northern state" (65).

Indentured servitude finally ended in Indiana after two enslaved women, Polly Strong in 1820 and Mary Clark in 1821, presented their cases against their own indentured contracts in court with the help of an abolitionist lawyer. Together, the two cases recognized the state Constitution over previous laws and

determined that the supposedly voluntary nature of indenture contracts did not exist. Even after Mary Clark's case, the practice of indentured servitude in Indiana existed for two more decades (Finkelman 2015). Abolitionist activity like this, as well as the Underground Railroad, existed side-by-side. Indiana's Quaker communities were central actors in abolitionist work, and often facilitated the resettlement of black immigrants to Indiana (Thornbrough 1993).

Even as indentured servitude shrunk, Indiana passed "black laws" in 1831 that required any black person moving into the state to register themselves with a local official, with proof that their freedom, and "provide sureties for their good behavior and economic independence" (Finkelman 2015, 89). If a person could not supply these things, or failed to register, he or she could be hired out for six months, the proceeds of which went to the county. White individuals who assisted or hired unregistered black individuals were also subject to being hired out. Emma Thornbrough (1993) suggests that these laws were often not enforced, but served as a strong showing of racial prejudice, mobilized by fears of unmitigated immigration by former slaves into the state (39, 56). Local newspapers that published letters and articles debating the legislation and debating whether or not local black residents were compliant materialized this, in part. These were some of the first laws put in place to restrict the presence of people of color in the state, and they coincided with the forced relocation of Native American tribes under the 1830 Indian Removal Act. The Potawatomi Tribe was marched out of Indiana in 1838, and most Miami were forced out in 1846 (Indiana Department of Natural Resources n.d.). Members of both groups are still present in Indiana. (Strange 2013)

Despite the state's harsh black laws, it was still one of the only states where slavery was formally prohibited, which drew new black immigrants into the area. Ongoing abolitionist Quaker activity also facilitated black immigration into the area. More than twenty free black settlements are documented from this period, many in the southern part of the state and also near other Quaker settlements (Cord 1993).

This environment laid the foundation for Indiana's 1851 Constitution, which explicitly barred new black immigrants to the state and created a fund for any existing black residents who were willing to move to Liberia (Thornbrough 1993, 64). At the same time, the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850 mandated that

any runaway slaves be returned to slavery. During the 1850s, the previously-growing black population stabilized and some free settlements began to shrink: “Census records show a net increase of only 160 persons for the entire decade” (53). Many who were settled in the south moved further north, at times to Canada, because of the threat of violence from white locals.

For black residents who stayed in southern Indiana, the Constitution legally enforced segregation and severely limited participation in legal systems. It “barred black men from militia service, voting, and office holding” (Finkelman 2015, 95). Black children were not allowed to attend public schools, and interracial marriage was disallowed even while other northern states were getting rid of similar miscegenation laws. Many of these laws mirror what had developed in the South during slavery, which were intended to limit relationships between poorer whites and slaves. This includes the prohibition on mixed-race gatherings, whether for protest or celebration, prohibitions on alcohol for black residents, miscegenation laws, and others. Keri Lynn Merritt (2017) suggests that these laws were put in place by southern slaveholders who recognized the danger of relationships between enslaved black individuals and poor white individuals, who had good reason to dislike slaveholders and the system of slavery as a whole.

Between 1860 and 1900, black residents largely left southern rural Indiana and moved into urban centers:

In spite of the fact that the total Negro population of Indiana showed a fivefold increase between 1860 and 1900 some parts of the state showed little or no increase, while there was actually a decline in some places. In some instances this was due to deliberate anti-Negro policy; in others it was primarily due to economic causes. Some communities gained a reputation for being so hostile that no Negro dared stay overnight in them (Thornbrough 1993, 224).

Washington County, which terrorized black residents to move out and by 1880 the county “had become proscribed territory,” not allowing any black persons to enter even for service. Other areas that saw their black population reduced to nearly zero included Crawford County, Utica town in Clark County, and Scottsburg or Lexington in Scott County. “In the little town of Linton in Greene County all Negroes were barred after a coal company attempted to use Negro strike-breakers” (Thornbrough 1993, 227). By 1900 there were 29 Indiana counties that were home to fifty or fewer black residents, and 22 of

them were in the southern region of the state and “most of the agricultural settlements had disappeared” (228).

The early history of people of color in southern Indiana is largely characterized by white settlers forcing others out. By 1900, the region was populated mostly by white rural communities. The arguments behind the policies and actions included concern for white jobs, concern that poorer black people would require public assistance, and simply that the presence of black people would degrade the quality of a community (Thornbrough 1993). In each case, the wellbeing of white communities was believed to be contingent on the absence of people of color.

After 1900, most civil rights struggles were centered in cities in central and northern Indiana. Local NAACP chapters, which consolidated into a state-wide organization in 1947, challenged a number of discriminatory practices including refusal to serve black Hoosiers in restaurants, theaters, hotels, and other establishments (Thornbrough 1987). Much of this was done in close partnership with the Indiana chapter of the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO), a union that represented a number of industries throughout the state. Fredrickson (Fredrickson 1981), notes that when unions sought to represent many industries rather than one, they were more likely to represent a racially integrated membership (227). In addition to their labor representation, the CIO worked with the NAACP to organize coordinated civil disobedience, in which racially mixed or black groups sought service at various establishments throughout the state. While much of this history is focused on Indianapolis, Emma Lou Thornbrough (302), describes how in 1942, Indiana University students in Bloomington protested outside of businesses that refused service to black customers, successfully ending segregated practices by those businesses. Significant work to realize civil rights in the state were tied to aligning private business practices with state law. In 1945, the state passed a weak fair employment act, ended segregated schooling in 1949, and in 1961 created a weak Indiana Civil Rights Commission (311). Thornbrough’s descriptions of this period make clear that even while the civil rights movement was gaining momentum in the southern states, in Indiana challenges to discriminatory practices rarely received support from either white newspapers or white legislators until the 60s (315). National pressures did influence state policies in the mid-60s and the

state passed a civil rights bill in 1963 that provided the Indiana Civil Rights Commission, created in 1961, with authority to investigate and issue subpoenas in relation to complaints. By providing the Commission with “teeth,” the state had a more effective enforcing compliance with civil rights legislation (338).

Precarity and White Nationalist Frameworks

In southern Indiana during the early and mid-twentieth century, unions became one place where practical alliances, in some cases, brought workers of many racialized backgrounds together. Returning to Cameron’s memoirs, he described how Dustin McDonald, “the head of the common laborers union”, responded to a racist comment at a Federation meeting:

Dusty arose, looming large. “Most of you brothers don’t have the coloreds in your unions,” he began, “but we do. And they are our brothers. They got the same privileges the rest of us do. And while you may not have them, you better treat them right because if you don’t they’ll scab on you.” The speech has remained with me as an illustration of the difference between a liberal and a working class approach (Filardo 1995, 615).

McDonald’s comments speak to the practical alliances that arose within unions between workers of various racialized backgrounds, and some of the gaps in organizing for all workers that exist without it. This is not an image of perfect harmony. Yet it does indicate a space in which workers of color could leverage their own power to contest the ways that race was used to deny them access to better working conditions, even if fellow white workers were using race to their own benefit. It also indicates how the very same manipulation of race weakened the entire union in relation to managers and owners. That GE targeted their extensive training toward women and workers of color also hints at how unions could be avenues for marginalized workers to challenge barriers they experienced in many working environments.

Scapegoating like this still exists in Indiana and has grown alongside other white supremacist groups in the past decade. Matthew Parrot founded Hoosier Nation, a white-supremacist group in 2009, which later became the Indiana chapter of the Council of Conservative Christians (ADL n.d.). In 2011 Parrott joined Matthew Heimbach to found and lead the Traditionalist Worker’s Party (TWP) from Paoli, Indiana. That organization is staunchly anti-Semitic and white supremacist, arguing for an ethnopluralist world organized into various homogenous ethnic states (SPLC n.d.). The TWP prioritizes “..local

organizing and advocacy for real-life working families who share our identitarian and traditionalist vision” (SPLC n.d.), realized through stark gender roles, increased welfare for white people, and an end to capitalist policies that support large corporations over working families (SPLC n.d.). In March 2018, Parrott supposedly destroyed TWP membership rolls and ended the organization in Indiana after a very public falling-out between he and Heimbach (ADL n.d.).

TWP’s focus on working families in crisis mimics the character of the Ku Klux Klan in 1920s Indiana. The Klan was not explicitly violent⁵ but entered into a moment of crisis in which southern Indiana communities were experiencing dramatic shifts from agricultural to industrial labor markets:

... the Klansmen also sought to revitalize a sense of social and civic unity in community life and uphold traditional religious and moral values. These concerns were all related to the fact that by 1920 American society had been fundamentally altered by decades of industrial growth and economic concentration. The forces of consolidation had eroded established patterns in community life, undermined traditional, commonly held values, and diminished the ability of the average citizen to exert a strong influence in public affairs (Moore 1991, 11).

Importantly, while the Klan’s size in 1920s Indiana was significant, its ideology was not necessarily unique. The Indiana Klan was only smaller than the Klan in Atlanta, which was then home to the national headquarters. During the 1920s, between one-fourth and one-quarter of white men in Indiana paid \$10 membership dues⁶ to the organizations. These figures do not include women and children engaged in organized Klan movements. This made the Klan larger than the Methodist Church or veterans associations in the state at the time (7). Members included clergy, politicians, and a general cross-section of white society. The Indiana Klan reached its peak in 1924, when Klan members won elections at every level of state government. Leonard Moore (1991) attributes the Klan’s downfall in the latter half of the decade to scandal and corruption that engulfed Klan political leaders, dissolving the faith that dues-paying members had in the organization (188). Moore also poses that members, motivated to join the Klan in part

⁵ “A number of public writers and historians seem convinced that the Ku Klux Klan was not a major factor in the growth of education-related prejudice and acts of racism in Indiana in the 1920s. It seems reasonable, however, that the atmosphere stemming from Klan activities was ideally suited to the growth of overt racism by neighborhood associations [that did impact school segregation]” (Warren 1993, 33)

⁶ Approximately \$126.44 in 2018, adjusted for inflation (“\$10 in 1920 → 2018” n.d.).

because it promised an effective vehicle for enforcing Protestant values within state law, were less willing to support Klan leaders when the wave of elected Klan members failed to pass substantive legislation in the mid-20s (185). In his study of the 1920s Klan, Moore reflects on the day-to-day acceptability of the Klan's bigotry combined with civic activism: "The Klan's views on ethnic minorities were widely shared or at least tolerated in society; and in Indiana, especially, public affairs and political movements had always been interwoven with deeply rooted white Protestant cultural hegemony" (22).

Tendencies for majority-white communities to revert to white supremacist frameworks in times of crisis make sense in the U.S. because the frames are sustained throughout American ideas of wellbeing and safety. This is the case in times of stability as well as crisis, leading Moore to reflect: "...as one of the largest social movements in modern American history, the Klan of the twenties may not have been a backward-looking aberration as much as it was an important example of one of the most powerful popular responses to social conditions in twentieth-century America" (6). This powerful response contrasted "real Americans" with "hoodlums", "crooks," and "whiskey-loving aliens" who were "organized like never before" against traditional Protestant ethics (35). They feared "...that rural, small-town culture had lost its place at the center of American life, that the nation had been delivered into the hands of urbanites, anarchists, and immigrants" (3).

The Klan in the twenties and the Traditionalist Workers Party in 2018 were responding to different contexts. I do not assume that organizations a century apart had the same causal relationship to the world around them. Instead, I recognize that both groups, rooted in southern Indiana, highlight the prominence of white nationalist patterns sustained throughout the history of the region, and the connection of these ideas to the wellbeing of white Protestant Hoosiers. Like Hughey's (2012) white nationalist participants, the TWP represents a similar expression of idealized whiteness that is drawn from the patterns and behaviors inherent in their social context.

Neither the TWP nor the Klan was distant in the minds of my research participants. Alice remembers how the Indiana Klan was represented in her own family:

I don't know specifics, but ... my grandparents, at least on my Dad's side, were extremely racist. My grandfather was a Grand Wizard of the KKK and, um, I remember getting in fights with them when I was like, 12-years-old because they would say racist things around us and I was becoming more aware of those things and ... I even remember when I was 5-years-old and I had heard my grandfather say the 'n' word and ... I didn't know what that meant but I repeated it to my mother and she smacked me for it. ... That was the first time that ... I learned about race, honestly (Alice).

Jennifer reflects on what it means for Hoosier Action to be growing and shaping a collective identity in the context of resurging, organized white nationalist groups:

After Charlottesville happened we had a member meeting and ... everybody was feeling a lot. And you know, close to us, ... geographically, there's the [TWP] and then I also had this urgency of like, we can't just lay this on the feet of these white supremacists ... or Nazis or whatever, you know? That ... usually there's just this larger, broader system that's feeding it. ... Trump isn't an aberration, that this all ... part of this thing that's been happening for 400 years and the last 40 years... (Jennifer, 2017c).

David reflects on how dominant discourses can misrepresent the root causes of white nationalism by associating racism with rural, poorer white communities. Speaking of Greenwood, Indiana, a suburb south of Indianapolis, he says:

But that's the ultimate atomization... and that's like more, much more affluent people and more conservative people. And to my mind much more racist people, like the people who are more ... vulnerable to the appeal of Donald Trump and other white nationalist groups ... [T]he myth that's peddled by ... main stream media sources, basically, is that these groups are populated by ... toothless hillbilly, whatever. And that basically they're not. They're like – even Matthew Heimbach of Paoli, Indiana, which is just up the road ... is from the wealthy DC suburbs (David).

Organized white nationalist movements have some deep roots in Indiana. Like the Klan in the 1920s, the TWP, even though it is no longer operating, offered Hoosiers a way to organize in response to precarity by relying on values and beliefs long present in Indiana, which make achieving white wellbeing contingent on the absence of ethnic and religious minorities. Hoosier Action invites members into an alternative narrative in the midst of this precarity, seeking agency without defaulting to extremist political allegiances and the white nationalism that can accompany it. While unions are still struggling in the region, Hoosier Action builds upon the power-based organizing that was once common in southern Indiana. Their reliance on power analysis, engaged through personal story and clarity about regional patterns related to racialization, assumes that differentiated experiences are present and can be understood

alongside one another. They explicitly challenge the idea that the wellbeing of some requires the absence of others, by asking who benefits, and how, when differently marginalized groups do not know one another.

Conclusions

In recent decades, neoliberal economic policies have allowed corporate managers to increase their own profit by picking apart various aspects of job security that unions had secured throughout the twentieth century. More than just changing how employment functioned within the workplace, these changes rippled throughout smaller towns because they impacted local ownership and the related motivation for investing in local businesses, news outlets, schools, or leisure activities. Without strong unions, both workers and political representatives became increasingly disconnected from worker-centered politics. In southern Indiana, the resulting precarity is compounded by preemptive state-level legislation and efforts to privatize Indiana school systems.

In some areas, the result has been a layered degradation of the institutions that gave meaning to daily life. Relationships built through the public school system, empowered local government, and in the workplace, for example, were more locally-accountable and influenced by the needs of local constituencies. As such institutions have disappeared or changed dramatically, the relational identities and the expressions of power co-constructed with those patterns of life have also shifted. Many of these regions are majority-white, Protestant communities in rural areas. Where they have not been able to effectively support themselves throughout this change, scholars like Case and Deaton have tracked increasing despair-related deaths strong enough to have increased mortality rates across the country for this demographic. Deemed “sacrifice zones,” these patterns in rural areas mimic earlier and simultaneous patterns of exploitation experienced across geographies in the United States, including urban regions, that are home to majority Native American, African American, Latinx, or newcomer populations (Edelman 2018, 2). These patterns of exploitation are aspects of structural violence and merit a trauma-informed approach (Yoder 2005, 12).

In southern Indiana, as with other areas of the United States, organized white nationalist groups are settling back into long-standing narratives that scapegoat religious and racial minorities, holding these groups responsible for the increased vulnerability that white, Protestant communities are experiencing. These frameworks have been constructed throughout Indiana's history, and are easily mobilized during crises. A closer look at the presence of white nationalist groups in Indiana, like TWP or the Klan, hints at the availability of these ideologies across time. Earlier racialized histories in southern Indiana make clear that white supremacist ideologies and expressions have existed alongside abolitionist and emancipatory action for most of the time that settlers have been in the region. In Indiana, this ideology is co-constructed with practices of systematically pushing out people of color, combining a sense of normalcy for white settlers with the perceived absence of people of color. Even as the vast majority of individuals in southern Indiana identify as white, narratives that manipulate white people around fears of the presence of people of color in the future are low-hanging fruit for authoritarian movements. This influences the scope of Hoosier Action's work, the diversity of individuals speaking into their strategies and collective knowledge around power, and their conceptualization of who their constituents are, more broadly.

However, by shifting focus and considering the material realities of growing precarity, and the connections that this lived reality has with urban or rural areas, Hoosier Action intervenes with an alternative framework for making sense of precarity and the related trauma or pain that accompanies it. This links Hoosier Action to other legacies in the area, that of abolitionist, emancipatory, and worker-led movements that have also always existed in the region. By orienting their work around a power analysis, Hoosier Action invites participants into patterns and behaviors that contradict existing iterative processes of exclusion and strategic division, making space for different patterns and behaviors that build relationships and construct identities based on trust, mutual risk, and collective values reliant on multiple types of diverse experiences. Their primary goal is to work with the communities in southern Indiana to address the ongoing causes of pain, in part by highlighting how more politically powerful groups have manipulated social difference in a way that facilitates ongoing precarity. Their focus on understanding and building power is informed by lead organizers' own experiences with the full range of skills required

to address personal pain that integrate personal and political resources, as well as their training within movements with strong leadership by people of color. Hoosier Action's work to build power within and alongside marginalized communities challenges the root causes of ongoing precarity and offers a meaningful alternative to the resurgence of white nationalism in Indiana. Scholarship from PACS, critical race theory, and anti-racist feminism provide tools for thinking well about Hoosier Action's work in this context.

Chapter 3. Literature Review

Introduction

This research is primarily related to the PACS literature surrounding identity and conflict, contributing to that body of research with a focus on how identity functions within deepening conflict. I rely on Positioning Theory to analyze how identity is related to actions and behaviors and analyze that activity in the context of grassroots organizing in Southern Indiana. The literature in this chapter offers a theoretical foundation for the case study in the following chapters, highlighting ways that identity functions within that particular effort to mobilize a coalition to seek political change. I propose that relational approaches to power can support coalitions that are inclusive of various identity positions and can catalyze collective action without reifying identity positions. In a context where race is a primary social identity, diverse coalitions including white people can contradict and subvert white supremacist structures locally and globally.

This chapter provides a brief overview of how identity is treated within Positioning Theory as it relates to the PACS literature and pairs this work with critical race theory and anti-racist feminist literature. I discuss the value of intersectional identity coalitions and discuss self-reflexive approaches to individual diversity that entail creative action between self and society, and how storytelling offers one primary tool for making meaning in this process. I address risks associated with recent questions related to contact theory and collective action before ending the chapter with a discussion on power and privilege discourses as it relates to this case study. This final space allows a deeper conversation on whiteness studies and its applicability to contemporary, geographically-focused struggles

Peace and Conflict Studies, Positioning Theory, and Identity

Throughout this study, I treat identity as "...constituted in specific lived realities bound and shared through story, myth, history, and legend" (Cook-Huffman 2009, 19). Stuart Hall described identity as "... names we give to the different ways we are positioned by, and position ourselves within, the narratives of the past" (Hall 1990). Rather than a set of immovable facts that describe a natural state of

being, as primordial approaches to identity would suggest (Jeong 2000), identity positions like gender, race, class, or nationality each are given meaning from their respective histories, contexts, and the narratives that are used to interpret them. As history and context change, the meanings associated with identities might shift, as well. In this way, identities are multiple, contested, and dynamic (Calliste and Sefa Dei 2000).

Individuals and communities apply meaning to identities based on the various contexts they inhabit. This includes current and historical social systems, often built across generations, that distribute resources and approval differently based on identity positions. Class identity, for example, exists because of social stratification based on various levels of wealth or, in a Capitalist society, based on the level of control a group has over means of production (Black 2012). Identity functions as a container for the meanings people apply to themselves in relationship to others and the world around them by associating values and status to particular experiences.

In her use of Positioning Theory to understand how identity contributes to conflict or peace, Nikki Slocum-Bradley (2008) offers the working definition, “‘Identities’ are meanings – labels, categories, symbols, and so forth – applied to persons or other narrated actors in specific contexts” ((Slocum-Bradley 2008). This has implications for how people apply value to themselves and others, values that justify decisions about how they and others deserve to be treated, the appropriate rights and duties in response to those applied decisions, and policies or systems that people build based on those rights and duties. In this way, identities gain traction and have material impacts on peoples’ lives as meaning is applied to them through these applications within various contexts.

Positioning Theory offers tools for analyzing the relationship between personal experience and decisions to act in relationship to others. In her analysis of identity and conflict at the U.S.-Mexico border, Slocum-Bradley expands upon the traditional positional triad of Positions, Storylines, and Social Force [of discursive actions], by including Identities as a fourth point functioning interdependently with the rest. A researcher might analyze the interactions between these four points to understand how a person self-identifies and how that self-understanding influences actions that contribute to conflict or peace.

Within Positioning Theory, interactions between the four points influence how a person interprets the rights, duties, and actions of another person which, in turn, justify actions taken toward another person. To connect the four points to action, Slocum-Bradley suggests steps a person moves through to interpret these narratives and determine appropriate action in response (Slocum-Bradley 2008, p 214):

STEP 1) Establishing a meaning system

1. A narrative context is evoked ('storyline')
2. Certain identities are evoked within the context; and,
3. Rights and duties are allocated to persons, in accordance with the identities evoked (Elements 1, 2, and 3 are accomplished (simultaneously) through discursive acts)

STEP 2) Interpreting a transgression

1. Interpretation of transgression:
 - a. interpretation of an action as a transgression of another's rights; and/or
 - b. interpretation that an actor has failed to fulfill the duties assigned to him/her/it;
2. Ascription of intentionality (on purpose, accidental); and
3. Evocation of identities of the alleged transgressor(s) and victim(s)

STEP 3) Redressing an alleged transgression

1. Determine general measure(s) to redress the alleged transgression;
2. Determine the implementation of the measure(s); and
3. Identify who the measure(s) should address (evocation of identity of the alleged transgressor).

As an example of how these steps play out, Slocum-Bradley offers two narratives, one in which immigrants to the United States are said to be "cleansing" the U.S. (narrative context evoked, including identities), implying that there are "'impurities' at hand" (interpretation of negative value), and one in which immigrants are "enrichments" to society (alternative narrative context, including identities, which apply positive value). In the latter narrative, the rhetoric would justify a right to nurturance (interpretation of action), while the former implies a violation of the rights of non-immigrants 'justifying' a violent duty in response (interpreting and redressing a transgression) (134). For Slocum-Bradley, a person's agency to create more peaceful or more conflicting environments rests within these interpretive steps and she looks at engaging narratives that, "'suggest' acts and actions that are non-violent" (135).

The positioning diamond partners with discourse analysis to understand the meaning-making, power positioning, and social forces of relevant narratives. Meaning-making processes justify actions

from the narratives and stories told, which assign rights and duties to a particular actor and justify decisions for action “...discourse is at once text and a form of social interaction.... Although much contemporary racist practice is discursive and hence only seems to consist of words, the consequences of these practices on the minds and moods of both the dominant and dominated groups are critical” (van Dijk 2011, 43). In part, this relies on a sharp analysis of the context in which the discourse occurs (52). Discourse analysis offers tools for interpreting the “ideological reproduction of racism” because “...it is through text and talk that racist beliefs are acquired and confirmed” (63). This research also suggests that racialized patterns of behavior, sustained over generations and shaping contemporary relationships, offer a ‘text’ that need not be explicitly spoken or taught for it to be consistently reconstituted in relationship to historical contexts. For this research, then, discourse analysis clarifies the social function of defining social hierarchies and power structures, and how those definitions are used to justify violence or nonviolence according to perceived rights and duties within southern Indiana.

In the U.S., “working class” is a phrase loaded with meanings that shift depending on how a person perceives this social identity. Those beliefs in turn shape how that person determines his or her own responsibilities toward individuals within the “working class.” For some, “working class” might evoke hard-working laborers, perhaps in manufacturing or mining professions, as is common in southern Indiana. This perspective has at times served as a mobilizing force for unions and those within the social group, connecting a value to their hard work and assigning to themselves rights to shorter hours, safer workspaces, more control over the work environment, or better pay. Taken in the context of segregated unions, “working class” might be used to prioritize white working people over others, reserving the benefits of “working class” to white, often male, workers. Without a fuller reflection on the values related to “working class”, these benefits could, and have in the past, been denied to African American, women, or immigrant workers who perform the same or similar work. In this context, unions at times served as spaces for non-white laborers to struggle for recognition within a “working class” identity, altogether.

In the context of the civil rights movement, Robyn Muncy (2016) describes the impact that “working class” had when used by the American media, themselves an “..ostensibly non-racist majority”

to imply "... that noxious racial politics were somehow *contained* by class boundaries." She describes the increase in the use of "working class" in the 1960s, as a reference for white Americans in the southern states who did not support civil rights struggles. In this use, "working class" symbolized an ill-defined white population more likely to be racist than other wealthier white groups. The phrase painted individuals as racist, or backwards, and distinct from wealthier, northern white Americans, who were supposedly not racist and who supposedly supported the civil rights movement struggles. Used in this context, "working class" served a double purpose of assigning blame to an ill-defined population and exonerated wealthy white Americans from participating in racism. It also ignored the many class-based and economic struggles within the civil rights movement, again erasing the work of African American or Latino (especially on the West Coast) working people within the struggle, itself (Marable and Wilson 2006, 32-33).

A similar use of 'working class' became prominent during and after the 2016 Presidential election. Donald Trump, who regularly used anti-immigrant and other racist language to mobilize a political base, was voted into office by winning a majority of electoral college votes and slight loss of the popular vote ("Presidential Election Results 2016" 2016). Much of his success was attributed to racist, white, rural, working-class or poor Americans. It has taken significant research to begin to shift this perception. Voting data has shown that Trump voters had a higher than average income in their state (Carnes and Lupu 2017), that poorer Americans of all races are less likely to vote overall (Weeks 2014), and that education was more closely tied to support for Trump than was income (Silver 2016). Rather than economic hardship, ongoing research points to frustration and fears of lost status within Trump's base (Mutz 2018). By shifting responsibility from some (wealthier) white Americans to an abstract population of poorer, backwards, white Americans, "working class" again exonerates some from the responsibility of addressing racism within the American political system and depersonalizes racism to the extent that very little can be done to end it.

As this example shows, groups apply different meanings to identities over different periods of time, which in turn inform conflict dynamics. Social discourses, like "working class" do work because

they apply rights and duties to various individuals depending on the contexts of use. Understanding identity in peace and conflict requires understanding these processes of construction. Race is another primary example of this. As Europeans expanded their own settlements throughout the globe and built societies that benefited settlers to the detriment of others, whether Indigenous to the land on which the settlement was built, other migrants, or enslaved individuals, settlers forced unequal distribution of resources along lines of ethnicity and nationalism (Byrne, Clarke, and Rahman 2018; Byrne 2017). After generations of processes created to sustain this social order, and with the lines of difference drawn more closely according to phenotype, differentiated resource access was attributed not to elite power, but to the bodies of those were marginalized by such stratification. This stratification was normalized throughout various policies. Responsibility for the stratification became disconnected from the systems that sustained such differentiation, and responsibility and character of stratification was assumed to race, itself.

Various identity positions can be difficult to disentangle from one another. Race, class, gender, religion, and nationality are all examples of identity positions that overlap and inform the experiences associated with any particular position. In the U.S., race has become one total social identity that can subsume others, in which “...the social identity so formed can be so compelling and all-consuming ... displacing or subsuming other aspects of an individual’s identity” (Black 2012, 148). In the case of total social identity, a person may understand the world primarily through the values and meaning that their social identity provides to them, and it may also be the lens through which they perceive the world’s treatment of them and those who share the same identity, even as that total social identity is interlocked with multiple other identity expressions.

In the U.S., race has become such a primary lens through which individuals understand social stratification that it is difficult to see how other positions, like class, impact exploitation of vulnerable individuals. White American men, in particular, are currently experiencing a kind of vulnerability that has not been felt for generations within their ranks (Case and Deaton 2015). Rather than attributing newfound vulnerability to decades of elites’ economic decisions, which have drastically shaped the landscape of the U.S., many attribute their increased vulnerability to exploitation targeting them based on their whiteness.

An October 2017 poll found that 55 percent of white (non-Hispanic) respondents believed that there is discrimination against them as white individuals. (“DISCRIMINATION IN AMERICA: EXPERIENCES AND VIEWS OF AFRICAN AMERICANS” 2017) White Nationalist groups in the U.S. increased from 602 to 1002 between 2000 and 2010, the same period of time when more Americans experienced economic instability, the election of President Barack Obama, and news that the U.S. is on track to become a majority-minority country (Potok 2016). By attributing vulnerability primarily to race, dominant discourses scapegoat racialized minorities and migrants for their distress and social frustration. Generations of white supremacist social stratification does some of this work for them, as “...racist ideology rationalizes the economic plight of the vast majority of people of color,” with the impact that white vulnerability is a mobilizing point for systemic political action, whereas vulnerability for people of color is individualized and assumed to be the norm (Pulido 2015, 811).

Critical Race Studies, Power, Intersectionality, and Social Movements

Critical social theories, as summarized by Patti Lather (1991) are “informed by identification with and interest in oppositional movements” (3). Conflict is impacted by the actions of resistance movements, which change the overall context and are changed in return. In *The Subject and Power*, Michel Foucault suggests that methods of resistance can identify power in a particular context, illuminating “a new economy of power relations”:

... it consists of using this resistance as a chemical catalyst so as to bring light to power relations, locate their position, and find out their point of application and the methods used. Rather than analyzing power from the point of view of its internal rationality, it consists of analyzing power relations through the antagonism of strategies (Foucault 1982, 780).

Oppositional movements, like Tarrow’s “contentious collective action” highlight power through ongoing interactions and the impact they have on one another (Tarrow 2011). Taken within a global context, movement antagonism can identify the ways that space, history, and collective action help to shape identities and encourage action. Gaye Theresa Johnson’s work in relation to black and brown social movements in Los Angeles is also helpful, here. She focuses on how collective action from within

marginalized communities can create opportunities for those communities to expand on their own, potentially liberating, identities (Johnson 2013, x). Similar to Foucault's new economy, she proposes that, "In the face of persistent repression, particularly in the meaningful spaces of interracial congregation, [the strategies employed by working-class youth] can be studied as a barometer of the power relationships between oppressed and oppressors" (x–xi). This barometer can help develop a new narrative that is deeply imaginative and creative, considering multiple identities rooted in a particular time and place. "Spatial entitlements created new articulations, new sensibilities, and new visions about the place of Black, Brown, and working-class people on the local and national landscape" (x).

Reaching this creative space requires starting from experiences of marginalization, but it must clarify who enacts violence and how it is accomplished. Focusing only on those experiencing violence can render the oppressor or actor of violence invisible. When applied to racism in the U.S., Eduardo Bonilla-Silva (2014) warns of "...racism without racists," especially as multicultural discourse gains broader acceptance. If multicultural discourse assumes that social systems in the United States are racially and ethnically diverse, then any remaining racism must be personal, which can be difficult to hold to account. "In the US today, both racial consciousness and animus are increasingly required for an act, speech, symbol, or person to be acknowledged as 'racist' by the dominant society" (Pulido 2015, 810). Similarly, if neither systems nor individuals can be held accountable for racism, then decision makers address social challenges by centering on individual uplift. The issue becomes racialized people, not systems of inequality.

To gain the necessary clarification, Agnes Calliste and George J. Sefa Dei (2000, 29-30) suggest four concerns to address when interrogating identity in a way that combines context and individual positioning:

1. the politics of one's objective position
2. the specificities of the situation and contexts in which one is engaging in a specific politics...that is, awareness of the context and the practice implied by the context
3. a recognition that the contextual basis of knowledge is *practice* and *experience*
4. an awareness of the extent of power relations and asymmetries embedded in multiple identities, that is, identities are sites of power differences

These concerns shape identity analysis that includes both power and specific positions. It requires an increasing familiarity with the global and national dynamics impacting the context, past and present, which provide meaning to a space. Researchers must "...pay attention to flows of capital, labor, cultural and knowledge production between nations and regions" (Razack 2000, 40), and should clarify how and why we add meaning or assign values to various narratives. Finally, each of these aspects is enacted through power, and the person assigning value can compound or disrupt existing power dynamics through the act of knowledge production or analysis, itself.

Intersectionality, or "...the need to account for multiple grounds of identity when considering how the social world is constructed" (Crenshaw et al. 1991, 1245), entails analyzing regional, global, and historic contexts to inform identity analysis. As a concept, intersectionality builds on long-standing theory within Black feminist scholarship that articulates how historical patterns variously impact black women, and differently-positioned peoples in general, according to context and lived experiences (Carastathis 2014, 305) In addition to being aware of the many differences and dynamics external to a group of people, intersectionality points to the importance of identifying differences within a group. Otherwise, as Crenshaw noted, "...when the practices expound identity as women or person of color as an either/or proposition, they relegate the identity of women of color to a location that resists telling" (1242). Without engaging the multiple processes that construct and are influenced by identity, a person has less clarity regarding the ways that identity might influence future decisions or outcomes regarding peace or conflict. This lack of clarity can omit essential aspects of social identity, even to the point of resisting an honest engagement with a person's or group's experiences. Consistently omitting these narratives can reify dominant racialized patterns that privilege some narratives while resisting others, in this case, for African American women.

Shirene Razack's work serves as an example of the creative potentials that result from an intersectional practice:

I endorse a methodology that begins with an increased vigilance about transnational flows as they shape the lives of women we speak of (and always for) and as they shape ourselves. It is a methodology that pays attention to specificity. Imperialism demands that we understand women either as victims or agendas, as saviors or as saved, but not as complicated subjects acting within several hegemonic systems. Our task is therefore to materialize women from the South, or racialized women in the North for that matter, *and ourselves*, as real women but not in the way of authentic militant tribals, for example, or as women beaten down by barbaric or culturally dysfunctional regimes, religions, and cultures. Instead, we focus on how women are embedded in several hegemonic systems (Razack 2000, 50).

Razack's self-reflection models a negotiation between multiple identity positions and related forms of power. This clarity influences her decisions, judgements about her own and others' identities, and is clear about how they manifest within the university context that she is addressing. She highlights the importance of a self-reflective practice that is honest about personal positions and is clear about how that position is impacted and impacts regional or global power movements. Her reflection includes the possibility of being more or less powerful at various times. As a result, she creates space to imagine what can be done differently than what would be assumed within existing power relationships.

Razack's discussion of white women in Australia highlights the importance of this practice in the context of racialization, colonial settings, and women's engagement. She describes how white Australian women, who had been complicit in the disruption of Aboriginal families within the history of that country, "would later gain employment in the developing social welfare sector" (45). In part because of marginalization of their own experiences as women, white women established themselves as charitable care givers, even as such charity entailed separation of Aboriginal families as a necessary component of upholding a narrative of white women's goodness. Kerstin Roger (2000) expands on this tension, describing how social work, psychotherapy, and other helping professions grew in North America in response to women's desires to stay in the workforce after World War II-era manufacturing jobs returned to men. Again, this social transition for white women linked helping professions, white women's identities, and goodness together in a way that did little to substantively address systemic causes of distress, including racism or sexism. The appropriate way for white women to engage in society was through charity. While this altruistic work may be rooted in white women's marginalization, it highlights

how marginalization and superiority can exist alongside one another, and can function to maintain white supremacist systems:

In sketching this picture of white women's complicity with imperialism then and now, I want to stress that the very structure of imperialism left white women very few alternatives for participating in public life. Marginalized themselves, they are able to establish their citizenship in an imperial nation in few ways other than as caretakers of more marginalized women. It is precisely this combination of privilege and penalty that structures women in hierarchical relation to each other..." (Razack 2000, 46).

Razack goes on to connect this power dynamic to existing relationships between women of color scholars in the North and South, in which she describes Northern scholars' of color's job security as connected to their ability to serve as 'native informants' regarding women across the globe to the rest of North American academia: "We, too, are enjoined to establish ourselves, in different ways, on the backs of other women" (46).

A meaningful clarity about identity positions requires a clear understanding of the various social systems operating in that context, including relationships to regional and global economic, political, and social patterns. Such a layered focus moves beyond racialization as the primary focus and offers an idea of the various opportunities for new alliances that include but do not pivot on race. An honest and self-reflective practice in the midst of this clarity allows for creative thinking and action in response to the systems that, without resistance, will reconstitute identities within longstanding hierarchies. It invites individuals to connect to the various systems that impact their lives, along with a deeper understanding of how they as individuals negotiate self and system on a regular basis

Too often we are asked to subordinate one or more aspects of our identities to that which a monocular analysis privileges as significant. But in doing so, we are foreclosing a potential coalition with all those who share the repressed or excluded identities – not to mention betraying the possibility of a coalition among all parts of ourselves (Carastathis 2013, 942).

Alternative potential coalitions come to light through self-reflective engagement with various lines of identity and power in people's own lives, diverse self-interests that might contradict the pressure to confine to an idealized identity, and a refusal to allow existing hierarchies to determine relationships across difference. If people can organize around the diversity within identity groups; "identity categories *are* coalitions – constituted by internal difference as much as commonalities – then this changes how we

think about the political task of coalitional organizing” (945). This is a creative work, rather than simply descriptive, defined by struggle and praxis rather than identity alone, and this “embrace of others enables us to embrace parts of ourselves that have been derided, denied, and diminished” (957). It provides a relational and practice-oriented ‘off ramp’ from the pressure to conform to idealized and homogenous identity categories. It models an alternative. This creativity can also assist in imagining movements and futures that address multiple interlocking justice issues rather than single-issue movements.

Conflict, Identity, and Storytelling

Conflict is an intense influence on personal and cultural narratives, potentially deepening social identity markers. In conflicts, groups divide along lines of perceived difference and commonality, divisions given meaning through narrative, and which shape material and social worlds. Deep conflicts pit groups against each other based on multiple lines of division and competing self-interests, material changes in experiences that inform the narrative and meaning-making processes, in return. “In other words, deep-rooted social identity may be a product of conflict at least as much as deep-rooted conflict is a product of clashing social identities” (Black 2012, 149).

Control over this public meaning-making process is significant for identity formation, the meanings attributed to identity from multiple perspectives, and the decisions and actions based on those meanings (Senehi 2011). Social discourses often reflect the stories and meanings created by one dominant group over others and can reify denigrating or false discourses as “official”, maintaining a particular hierarchy of power and control. As with “working class” discourse, through which multiple meaning-making processes are available that sustain divisions along race even as class inequalities are addressed for some. Like all discourse, these narratives serve a social function, and that function can be related to peace or further conflict depending on the context and situation: “...exactly the same discourse (or discourse fragment) may have a racist function in one communicative situation and not in another...” (van Dijk 2011, 52). All groups in a social system are creating and interpreting meaning from their circumstances, including groups experiencing oppression:

Communities of color have constructed counter-discourses in the home, church, and informal school cultures in order to maintain their sense of humanity. They know too well that their sanity and development, both as individuals and as a collective, depend on alternative (unofficial) knowledge of the racial formation (Leonardo 2004, 144).

Stories can hold space for complex meaning-making, including negotiations between self, the collective, and the broader society. These narratives offer opportunities to make sense of alternative ways of living together and organizing society so that humanity is reflected in discourse and in relationships with one another. Creating this narrative can be a form of risk, as it may challenge or contradict dominant narratives with applied meanings that are used to justify resources distribution, with which dominant groups have a vested interest. Landholdings in a settler colonial state, for example, are one intensely challenging space where narratives between settlers and between various Indigenous groups challenge one another (Mackey 2014).

Privilege, White Supremacy, and Contact Theory

Recent research has identified the successes of contact theory, which holds that interpersonal interactions between conflicting groups can increase empathy and reduce antagonism (Saguy et al. 2009, 114). However, much of this research also shows that a marginalized group with increased empathy toward more powerful groups reduces the likelihood of dynamics necessary for collective action to end injustice. While deepened relationships across difference have had some positive impact in reducing prejudices of majority group participants, increased trust for the majority group on the part of marginalized participants might also reduce motivation to demand change within the social systems that perpetuate their marginalization (Dixon et al. 2010).

White privilege trainings might fall into this category. They often rely on raising awareness of white individuals regarding the benefits they receive from racist systems and ask them to address racism through knowledge of their own experiences and benefits. However, recent studies document that these interactions “may increase disadvantaged-group members’ trust in members of advantaged groups while decreasing their perceptions of racial inequality and support for the implementation of social change”

(Dixon et al. 2010, 77). In the context of multiculturalism, in which discursive space for racist acts and intents is narrowed to conscious intent and malice toward racialized minorities from white individuals, convincing white people to change based on privilege has a very narrow window of opportunity. White supremacy functions such that people with the best of intentions can still act daily in ways that uphold systemic racism, even without malice (Pulido 2015). Reducing individual perceptions does not necessarily reduce systems of inequality. If it did, Bonilla-Silva (14) asks, why, then, are people of color still disproportionately impacted by oppression and exploitation?

A more effective critical pedagogy “revolves less around the issue of unearned advantages, or the *state* of being dominant, and more around direct processes that secure domination and the privileges associated with it” (Leonardo 2004, 137). Such a focus understands white supremacy through the experiences of marginalized individuals, who have been aware of white supremacy and its machinations for generations, while “privilege” discourse, introduced in the early 190s (McIntosh 2005), moves at such a slow pace to gain traction that only recently has it become common parlance for white Americans.

White privilege continues to function as racism without racists (Bonilla-Silva 2014), because it “obfuscates the historical process of domination in exchange for a state of dominance *in media res*” (Leonardo 2004, 138). Removing racial domination from its historical constructions ignores the ways that racist systems have been reconstructed, shift, and recenter benefits for white people on a regular basis, including the ways that poorer white people have been disadvantaged by that same racial construction. Since various forms of racism, including settler colonialism, must recreate themselves throughout historical periods, understanding the processes that result in white domination are essential. This is patterned behavior: “It does not form out of random acts of hatred, although these are condemnable, but rather out of a patterned and enduring treatment of social groups” (139).

Privilege discourse also recenters race as a central concept and identity. It does not consider the diverse experiences within racialized communities. However, white supremacy does provide some explanation for the ways that race has been used to divide society across other social identities, including class and gender (140). This is, in part, because considering the processes of racialization requires the

type of clarity around systemic injustice that Razack (2000) and Carastathis (2013) point to. This means that racialization is seen in its global and regional contexts, alongside various interlocking hegemonic systems. Beginning from this position offers clarity on the relationship between individual and systemic dynamics and opportunity for multiple levels of engagement alongside people who are differently impacted by the same context.

Contact Theory might benefit social equity processes if they begin with changing individual perceptions, but that should be the catalyst for realigning perceptions of who various actors are aligned with. If the same people who walk into the room leave the room believing they are on the same team they were on when they entered, then contact processes may reify antagonistic identities. If the content of the interactions invites both teams to work together to change systems of oppression, a realignment may take place, and they may build new alignments to take risks together for the sake of changing oppressive social systems.

Whiteness

Whiteness studies do some of the work to clarify systemic hegemony that this study rests within. As a discipline, whiteness studies has often focused on the historical construction of whiteness in the U.S., investigating the racial and economic privileging of those ascribed with whiteness (Arnesen 2001). Many credit W.E.B. DuBois' "psychological wages of whiteness" (Du Bois 1935, 700) as the foundational work in whiteness studies (Arnesen 2001), which theorized an alignment across class, based on whiteness. Some more recent works in whiteness focus on differentiated experiences within whiteness that highlight racial identity construction across contexts. Rather than empty whiteness (Garner 2006) these studies highlight patterns and behaviors that constitute and reconstitute white identity in relationship to one another and to other racialized individuals (Roediger 1999; Wray 2006; Hughey 2012b; Ignatiev 1995; Saxton 1990). The field has faced criticism around questions of historical methodology, whether or not trying to define whiteness entrenches the racial identity, and whether or not the discipline is related to any serious means of social change (Arnesen 2001; Fields and Fields 2014; Hill 1998). I suggest that

whiteness studies benefits social change because it highlights the patterns that have entrenched white supremacy over time, investigating historical contexts and existing relationships for the material ways that racialization has been used to grant groups racialized as white certain privileges and resources at the sacrifice of people of color. Highlighting patterns that contribution to white supremacy over time can help clarify existing linkages to that same history, including ways that racial stratification is recreated over time to sustain white supremacy. By defining the patterns, people can build movements to resist those ongoing impacts.

Whiteness studies, resting within critical race studies, highlights how racial construction processes are deeply connected to power differentials as ‘whiteness’ has been continually redefined throughout U.S. history in service of concentrating power within elite white hands. This is reflected throughout colonialism, slavery, Jim Crow laws, and the current overrepresentation of people of color in U.S. prisons and jails (Alexander and West 2012). What’s more, “Cognitive research has demonstrated that enormous confusion remains among the American public about the concepts of race, ethnicity, and ancestry” (Black 2012, 156). With such a collective investment in a reality of race, the ‘myth’, ‘legend’, or ‘story’ of identity that (Cook-Huffman 2009) refers to can be lost. Pulido (2015) applies this confusion to the narrowing application of privilege discourses, and the idea that awareness of racist acts only applies to individual actions, not the broader system of white supremacy: “I argue that white supremacy embodies some level of awareness – although not necessarily true clarity. This lack of clarity is due to the general muddiness most people bring to questions of race, as well as the fact that real honesty might lead to social ostracism, and thus has a cost” (Pulido 2015, 813). Understanding processes of becoming white, rather than being white or doing whiteness (Leonardo 2004), highlights movement antagonisms and helps define the substance of white supremacy and racism, and invites collective imagination of what might be done differently, “a new economy of power relations” (Foucault 1982).

Karen E. Fields and Barbara J. Fields (2014) refer to the process of fitting real people into frameworks according to racial identity markers in the U.S. as the “strange maneuvering” (16) of *racecraft*:

... *racecraft* does not refer to groups or to ideas about groups' traits.... It refers instead to mental terrain and to pervasive belief. Like physical terrain, racecraft exists objectively; it has topographical features that Americans regularly navigate, and we cannot readily stop traversing it. Unlike physical terrain, racecraft originates not in human nature but in human action and imagination; it can exist in no other way (18).

Racecraft, then, refers to the mental and cultural activities used in the U.S. to apply the immaterial, dynamic framework of race to material realities and actions that impact the ways Americans relate to one another within a racialized society.

For poor and working class white Americans, *racecraft* may serve as a helpful tool for discussing their own racialization. Instead of engaging a static whiteness that is monolithic and fully privileged, racecraft offers Americans of all races opportunities to see how their particular experiences have shaped and been shaped by the topography of race in their lives. Experiences of marginalization due to class could be part of this topography, especially as it illuminates how experiences might be similar to and different from people of color.

When members of a dominant group come to see themselves as part of a group, they learn that they are only one segment of humanity and that their experiences are not universal. A relational view encourages people to see that the conditions of their lives are connected to, and made possible by, the conditions of other people's lives (Lucal 1996, 247).

A relational understanding of racialized experiences may help to uncover the myth of race by clarifying how race or class are constructed in relationship to one another, even if that relationship is one of conflict or antagonism. As Jennifer would say, "How has race manipulated you?" (Jennifer 2017a).

Whiteness, when viewed as a monolithic, unchanging category, washes over the nuances in the topography of individuals living with white identities. Few studies shift from historical constructions to contemporary expressions of white supremacy. Elizabeth Heilman's (2004) work with white elementary students whose families had moved from Appalachia to Indiana models why this is important. As she grapples with the ethnic slurs used against these students, the difficulties they often experienced because of language differences, and class stigma, she explains:

If "race" is to be understood to be an historical and social construction with no biological reality, and the white "race" is "a historically contingent and socially constructed racial category...defined by privilege and power rather than by marginalization and domination"

(Rodriguez, 1999, p. 21), it can be argued that these students are not fully “white” (Heilman 2004, 70).

“Not fully ‘white’” is reminiscent of the logical acrobatics of blood quantum. It maintains the assumption that race is real and a legitimate biological characteristic, which somehow naturalizes a white body with wealth and possession, even when based on a faulty analysis that can conflate privilege with power. This plays out in everyday interactions. Jennifer tells the story of discussing the concept of white privilege with a coworker at the restaurant she once worked at. A dishwasher at the restaurant, he responded to her suggestions that whiteness meant privilege with anger (Jennifer 2017a). Like the pain that Heilman’s students felt when they were mocked, or the anger Jennifer’s colleague felt at the suggestion that he was privileged, the distance between idealized whiteness and lived reality for an individual can differ substantively, to the point that they do not recognize themselves within the framework. In fact it can seem ridiculous. Rather than delineating between who is more or less white, to rely on Heilman, “The construction of dominant culture can more effectively be understood as hegemonic, differentiated, and complex rather than simply “white” (77).

Matthew Hughey’s (2012b) discussion of hegemony discusses whiteness as “...a kind of implicit ideal against which one’s worth, behavior – and ultimately one’s identity – were measured” (187). These idealized behaviors are readily available in a variety of circumstances and are applied as race continues to serve as a total social identity in the U.S. It is not the case that Heilman’s students, or other poorer people racialized as white are “more” or “less” white, it is that the long, generational negotiation of value and resources along racial lines rewards ideal expressions of whiteness, and these ideals are protected through boundary work that often rely on poorer white people being relegated to the margins of society (Wray 2006; Merritt 2017). Heilman’s students are one of many groups negotiating between the life they know and the idealized standard by which they are measured, and the ways in which their fellow students and educational institutions reward or discipline them accordingly. From this perspective, Hughey’s work with both anti-racist and white nationalist groups are not two extremes on a single pole, but they “magnify the dominant meanings of whiteness today” (Hughey 2012b, 192).

Hughey (2010) details the year that he spent with two groups of white individuals gathering based on race, one a white nationalist group and one a white antiracist group. His primary findings describe how both construct white racial identity “based on the reproduction of various racist and essentialist ideologies” (1289). His analysis of both groups provides a theory of white hegemonic identity, which:

...conceptualizes whiteness as a configuration of meanings and practices that simultaneously produce and maintain racial cohesion and difference in two main ways: (1) through positioning those marked as ‘white’ as essentially different from and superior to those marked as ‘non-white’, and (2) through marginalizing practices of ‘being white’ that fail to exemplify dominant ideals (1290).

Hughey connects these groups to shared patterns and behaviors that sustain an essential and differentiated whiteness, even though they have different outcomes or political goals. While he does not focus on class to a significant degree, Hughey defines white supremacist hegemony so as to demonstrate how white people from multiple and varied positions attempt to inhabit an idealized whiteness and related patterns of behavior. He also describes ways that members in both groups are held accountable to these patterns, encouraging one another into idealized behaviors. Rather than discount varied expressions of whiteness, Hughey’s description of these two groups illuminate how whiteness is expressed in daily behaviors.

Applying a hegemonic lens to whiteness provides a stronger mobilizing opportunity for change: “By recognizing that racial meanings are irreducible to the bodies they inhabit, we can gain purchase on how processes of racialization continue to shape how rights, resources, and rewards are (re)distributed” (Hughey 2012b, 193). To do this, racial analysis must move beyond privilege, and see the processes of constructing whiteness rather than only what white people do (Leonardo 2004). For Hughey (187), these processes are characterized by:

- **defining oneself in relation to people of color and their supposedly ‘dysfunctional’ pathologies** (e.g., white people attributing higher concentrations of poverty for people of color to the character or histories of that community),
- **by successfully claiming an embattled victim status** (e.g., white people understanding themselves as victims of affirmative action),
- **by framing oneself as a kind of ‘white savior’ to people of color** (e.g., by assuming that white people hold the key to ending racism through awareness of privilege, or through advocacy separate societies as an antidote for African American’s social and economic barriers),
- **by claiming possession of ‘color capital’ through interracial friendships** (e.g., white people claiming that they cannot be racist because they spend time with African American people), or

- **by exhibiting entitlement to racialized knowledge** (e.g., white people devaluing hip hop because a white person cannot understand the lyrics, or white people devaluing another person if they refuse to explain their own racialized experiences).

Other scholars highlight processes, including an expectation that the future will be predictable and stable (Mackey 2014), managerial or controlling relationships toward people of color (Hughey 2012b), or a gendered relationship in which white women gain professional and social success through charitable engagements with people of color (Razack 2000; Roger 2000).

Anne Bonds and Joshua Inwood (2015), rooted in settler colonial theory, focus their analysis of whiteness on reading a particular landscape in order to go beyond only white privilege, which can be individualistic, to recognize how histories of constructed white supremacy impact the bodies and lives of the people in a particular landscape. Their work encourages seeing multiple whitenesses, instead of a monolithic understanding of privilege, and advocates resistance to hegemonic whiteness. In this, they echo Leonardo (2004), Pulido (2015), and (Hughey 2012a).

Opportunities for Transformation

Like Razack, the modeling done by feminist scholars to critically engage and clarify multiple positionalities invites a stronger understanding of how white people uphold white supremacy on a daily basis, but also how they do not. By speaking of their own locations, these scholars and artists present a pointed analysis of power relationships across multiple social locations and identities (Calliste and Sefa Dei 2000). Kimberlé Crenshaw's (1989) work with intersectionality embraced the multiple locations that African American women held if they interacted with the criminal justice system as victims of domestic violence, and conveyed the importance of including those complexities when considering possibilities for marginalization but also for social change:

... the goal was not simply to understand social relations of power, nor to limit intersectionality's gaze to the relations that were interrogated therein, but to bring the often hidden dynamics forward in order to transform them. Understood in this way, intersectionality, like Critical Race Theory more generally, is a concept animated by the imperative of social change...interrogating the inter-locking ways in which social structures produce and entrench power and marginalization, and by drawing attention to the ways that existing paradigms that produce knowledge and politics often function to normalize these dynamics (Carbado et al. 2013, 312).

Like social geography, both cultural equity and direct education are methods of engaging individuals on issues of privilege and power in their own context. “‘Knowing in context’ involves unwrapping systems of domination, subordination across groups and within groups, while paying attention to the borders of connectivity, all in partnership...in other words, sharing and lending privilege” (Almeida, Hernandez-Wolfe, and Tubbs 2011, 49). This therapeutic practice takes seriously the material engagement with racial identities that are fluid and relational, while acknowledging that therapeutic healing should include “liberation through collective action” (45), hearkening to the creative negotiation between self and others.

Building relational connections while investigating power, privilege, and oppression is central to cultural equity and, as such, it embraces “teamwork involving therapists, advocates, mentors and clients” (53). Intentional investigations of identity as fluid and relational invite clients to take seriously the material impacts of privilege, power, and oppression in their own lives. This, in turn, opens doors to sharing power for the sake of healing within the group, and with the broader community of activists with whom individuals may be connected. By taking seriously that identity and related social boundaries are fluid, participants are understood to be capable of addressing and changing oppressive structures, together.

In addition, intersectionality has a vibrant theory of social change that relies on understanding identity politics less as groups of essentialized sameness and more as groups with internal differences working in coalition: “internally heterogeneous, complex unities constituted by their internal differences and dissonances and by internal as well as external relations of power” (Carastathis 2013, 942). Anna Carastathis (2013) develops this theory, born in Crenshaw’s earlier conversation about African American men and women supporting one another in coalition. (Fowler Snyder 2012) also explores the tension in identity politics “between fixity and fluidity” of identity markers. She seeks to articulate “a third way between essentialism and deconstruction” of identities that supports recognition movements while also

challenging traditional understandings of race, and white dominance along with it (249). This framework, although not purely therapeutic, applies well to grassroots organizing:

Organizing is not just a means to articulate grievances or to demand higher wages. Its power lies in the transformation of its subjects. Ordinary people begin to see themselves in a different way. Workers acquire a new sense of power and possibility – that they can change the way things are, both in the workplace and at home. The rhetoric of divisiveness and racial exclusivity offers no hope for black working people to challenge corporate capital or to reverse conservative trends in public policy on issues of race. Most black people really understand this. The act of organizing requires people to make effective connections with others who speak different languages or who represent different cultural traditions, nationalities, ethnicities, and religions. There is no monochromatic model for democratic change in a pluralistic society (Marable and Wilson 2006, 36).

Community organizing and relational power-building invite participants to engage their own identity positions in addition to engaging the social and political world that has shaped them. This type of process, negotiating self and society, can be deeply transformative and open new possibilities of relationship between individuals throughout processes of changing social systems.

Conclusions

PACS literature, like critical race studies, focuses on how identity and conflict or peace are mutually constituting dynamics because identity shifts as contexts change. For this reason, critically analyzing regional and global contexts clarifies how identity might contribute to either peace or conflict. While identity is dynamic, long-term patterns entrench certain identities as relationships and perspectives are shaped by experiences of difference or commonality. In the U.S., it can be argued that race is a total social identity that, while shifting, is a primary lens through which Americans make sense of the world around us. Intersectional analyses call scholars and practitioners to consistently clarify how diverse identity positions are constructed given shifting contexts, including regional and global flows of power. It requires attention to how specific positions, storylines, social impact, and identity interact with one another to connect values and beliefs to justified actions. Connecting identity to the material impact social stratification is essential in any practice of building peace where oppression exists along lines of identity, as it does in the U.S., and tracking those dynamics across time helps define what makes certain disparities

common sense. Clarifying the full and varied impacts of identity and peace or conflict requires an intersectional analysis, which can invite practitioners into a deeper analysis of identity while also highlighting potential coalitions across lines of difference.

Applied to long-standing racialization in the United States, understanding the negotiation between individuals or groups and broader hegemonic systems clarifies how people racialized as white reiterate white supremacist relationships as they work to express an idealized whiteness. Matthew Hughey describes some of these patterns and how they can function across white groups gathered out of a commitment to seemingly different racial projects. Applying an intersectional analysis in southern Indiana, with an eye toward Hughey's research and building from some of the early patterns of racialized history in Indiana, fosters a discussion of racialized, classed, and gendered histories that account for varied power within this majority-white region that has experienced significant challenges in recent decades. This includes discussing how Hoosier Action, or others, might effectively address topics like power and privilege in this context. The following chapters describe Hoosier Action's work from this foundation, looking for ways that their work effectively builds peace in the region. First, in chapter 4, I describe my research methodology and how the structure of the research contributes to the principles espoused in this project.

Chapter 4. Methodology

Introduction

This research is based on two and half weeks (September 18 to October 3, 2017), spent with Hoosier Action, a grassroots organizing community located in south central Indiana. The research method was participatory observation and ethnographic research: “simultaneously participating in as many activities as possible at a particular site or in a particular setting, observing what is transpiring, and interpreting what the researcher has participated in and observed” (Seligmann 2011, 242), with primary themes emerging inductively from gathered data in a grounded fashion. During the two weeks, I conducted semi-structured interviews (Appendix I) with four participants, two of whom were also participatory observation participants. After each day spent with participants I drafted personal field notes based on my impressions and observations from the day. This chapter details my research methodology, identifies the participants, and discusses my rationale along with strengths and weaknesses of the research.

Participants, Data Collection Procedures, Research Site, and Sampling Frame

I connected with Hoosier Action after performing internet searches for organizations that met this study’s criteria: an organization that does community organizing with a focus on both racial and class social issues. Hoosier Action fit this study’s criteria and had the added benefit of being based in my hometown of Bloomington, Indiana. After learning about Hoosier Action in June 2017, I contacted them through Facebook to discuss the possibility of conducting research with their organization. Hoosier Action’s Director agreed to a phone call, during which she invited me to do research with the organization. I submitted and received my ethics approval from the University of Manitoba Joint Faculty Research and Ethics Board in September 2017 (Appendixes V and VI). Once present with Hoosier Action, I spent my days at their office in Bloomington, Indiana, speaking with staff and travelling with them to visit partners in Bloomington and in New Albany, Indiana. I also participated in one member meeting of the Indiana University chapter, which took place on the university campus. I interviewed four

participants using a semi-structured format and followed a questionnaire intended to illicit conversation regarding participants' experiences, perspectives, and goals regarding race and class.

I relied on a snowball method for recruiting participants. Hoosier Action's lead organizers (Jennifer and David) both participated in interviews and introduced me to the two other participants (Sarah and Alice) with a personal introduction. Jennifer, Hoosier Action's Director, also provided a list of potential interview participants from a recent organizational event attendance list. I used this list to invite other Hoosier Action members to participate in interviews through email and a follow-up phone call. However, this approach did not result in any new participants, which I attribute to my methodology but also the language used in the invitation scripts. I am using pseudonyms for each participant in this study to protect anonymity.

Each of the participants in this study had experienced economic vulnerability at some point in their lives, and three of the participants indicated that they experienced some level of economic insecurity at the time of the research. All four participants identified as white. One participant, David, identified his experience as a Jewish man as an important entry point to his experiences as a white man, alongside his experiences as male and hetero-presenting. The three other participants, Jennifer, Sarah, and Alice were women.

Interviews were between one and two hours long, took place in person, and relied on approved documents from the research ethics proposal. I met with participants either at the Hoosier Action office, at a coffee shop, or while travelling to organizing events. I recorded interviews using password-protected software on my iPhone and transcribed each interview in winter 2017-2018. I provided each participant with a copy of their transcript for review via email. Each participant signed a confidentiality notice, semi-structured interview consent form (Appendix III) and, if appropriate, a participatory observation consent form (Appendix IV). I also provided participants with a list of local and affordable mental health resources available to them in the Bloomington area.

I used the following question guide for semi-structured interviews (also available in Appendix I):

- Can you tell me a bit about what it was like growing up in your hometown?

- What do you remember about how you learned about race when you were young? How was it discussed in your family? How do you understand it now?
- What were some things in your family that encouraged connection? Were there some things that gave you a sense of disconnection? How about with folks outside of your family? What behaviors or actions gave you that understanding?
- What made you decide to get involved with the host organization? Can you describe any barriers to your participation?
- What are you working toward with the host organization? What behaviors or actions contribute to that future?
- Has participation with the host organization changed the way you understand your role in your community? Your relationships with others who are different from you?
- What are your best hopes and dreams for yourself in the future? For your community?
- What are your worries for yourself and your community in the future?

After leaving Indiana, I relied on a generic inductive qualitative model (GIQM) to analyze data (Hood 2011) based on the transcriptions and my personal field notes. Once I finished transcribing, I organized the data into thirty memos based on themes that came up with some consistency. I prioritized memos in my outline which had the most data, indicating that they had come up most often across interviews and notes. I also included memos based on themes essential to connecting theories and ideas. To create the outline, I grouped memos into four broad themes, which became chapters, and used the individual memos in each group to draft subsections. My methodology was similar to Grounded Theory in that I developed theory from my data and focused on processes for identity construction within the data, “successively focusing data collection to develop [my] emerging analysis” (Charmaz 2017, 299). However, I began with a set sample for participants and question guidelines. I did not develop my line of questioning throughout the study (Hood 2011, 155). I did rely on Grounded Theory texts to inform my methods to develop memos and theory from those memos (Lempert 2011; Corbin and Strauss 2012).

Locating the Researcher

I chose to use participatory observation and semi-structured interview methodologies because the methods can align well with critical research theories, which partner research with oppositional movements. The goal of this research is not only to expand on theory, yet to clarify opportunities for

intervention into existing relationships across difference within the U.S. I hope that the material derived from this research serves as a tool to support ongoing work for social change.

Critical research reminds scholars that ideas about social relationships as they are observed are not neutral or value-free. Instead, researchers are invited to investigate their own values and assumptions that they bring to data collection and analysis. Objective data can be collected regarding the “real forces that impinge on the lives of groups and individuals,” but the interpretation of those forces is subjective and connected to individual perspectives (L. Brown and Stega 2005, 9). Participatory methods structure research to clarify this positioning, as best as possible, and to be clearer within research relationships. Ideally, this builds trust and rapport between everyone involved in the research, while also gaining a deeper understanding of participant perspectives and sharing my own (Seligmann 2011).

Participatory action researcher Alice McIntyre (2008) describes this process of sharing knowledge as reflexivity; “...a dialectical process within the context of the social relationships that exist between research practitioners and participants” (8). Throughout the processes of interaction, we each shaped one another’s perspectives. McIntyre describes the possibility of this dynamic: “It is there, in that dialectical process of investigation and consciousness-raising, that participants [and researchers] rethink positions, imagine new ways of being, acting, and doing, and grapple with the catalytic energy that infuses...projects” (31, addition mine).

In addition, Eileen O’Brien (2011) points out that for an interviewer to take on what he or she perceives to be a neutral attitude toward the interviewee may in fact be perceived as an expression of “colorblindness”, or lack of racial awareness that can discourage vulnerable conversations about racialized experiences. In response, O’Brien suggests intentionally “activating a racialized subject” (77):

...the interviewer strategically uses self-disclosure to alert the interviewee that they share a certain racialized understanding: Racism still exists, and one can be a hard-working, respectable person of color while still publicly discussing how racism limits him or her (79).

This text is particularly useful in light of the theoretical foundation provided by Bonilla-Silva (2014), in which he cautions against a “racism without racists”. O’Brien suggests constructing an interview that invites participants to speak freely about perspectives on race, perspectives that they may have been

marginalized for expressing in the past. In this research, I used some self-disclosure and clarified why I was asking certain questions to signal my reasoning that led to the question. I especially did this if it seemed the interview participant was confused by my question, or if the question was broad. This allowed me to be honest about my own positioning within the systems of concern, my own history, and to admit when I was learning something new that challenged and shaped my own thinking.

While performing this research, I was working as a community organizer in Ottawa, Ontario with a recognizable coalition of low- and moderate-income community members engaged in political activity around issues like affordable housing, payday lending, or support for people with disabilities. My role as an organizer and my roots in Bloomington, Indiana both served as shared experiences with Hoosier Action participants, and the model of organizing that I was working under in Ontario served as an informal contrast to Hoosier Action's model. For example, the model of organizing in Ontario is rather transactional, with a focus on turning members out for events, recruiting new members, and increasing numbers. Hoosier Action's work is more relational, focused on personal and public growth and building community while also working for political change. That I was well versed in a more transactional model of organizing served as an accessible counterpoint to Hoosier Action's model and clarified their practice through that contrast.

Although unspoken, I believe that my role as an organizer also contributed to a level of trust for me as a researcher asking to spend time with Hoosier Action. In my initial outreach to the organization, via Facebook, I introduced myself as an organizer and student with roots in Bloomington. Because of an understanding of the organization I worked for and experience as an organizer, Hoosier Action's leadership could assume certain things about me including my own support for the work they are doing and my level of understanding and shared language around their projects. Importantly, this may have included some trust in how I would approach interactions with Hoosier Action members as an organizer in addition to being a researcher, including how to be present and supportive with members while ensuring that the lead organizer is shaping the interaction, and not getting in the way or interrupting work that a lead organizer would do to invite members into planned actions.

Transparency and self-reflection on my part hopefully also contributed to trust-building and a confidence so that participants would understand how their words would be used in the study (Seligmann 2011). At the same time, it offered them the opportunity to critique my approach to their experiences, recentring them as the subjects of their own histories. In faithfulness to literature on conscientization, I treated interviews and interactions as opportunities to share any tools that I may have received from my own life and scholarship (Freire 2010). This means that, in part, participants had reciprocal access to my knowledge and tools as they shared their own with me.

Strengths and limits of this research

This methodology offered opportunities to speak with organizational leadership in depth about their reasons for committing to grassroots power-building work in southern Indiana, each of whom brought significant experience to Hoosier Action. They were incredibly hospitable in offering access to documents, inviting me to be present during meetings with members, and sharing their experiences and expertise with me. Both lead organizers who were part of the study brought decades of engagement in grassroots organizing and had a deep sense of their purpose, including how their work in Indiana connected to organizations across the country after the 2016 Presidential election.

As with any research that relies on shorter field work with fewer participants, this study is limited in scope by only interviewing four participants during just two and a half weeks. In addition, my time with Hoosier Action initially overlapped with a member training, which would have offered further participatory observation opportunities and a better understanding of interactions that occur within trainings. That training was cancelled midway through my visit, and as such I rely heavily on training documents and trainer interviews to discuss some of the primary ways that Hoosier Action engages members, rather than participation in the activities myself alongside members.

The initial question that this research intended to address was: *What role to poor- and working-class white individuals play in racial justice efforts?* As I spent time with Hoosier Action, it became clear that the pedagogy they use focuses more on engaging everyone in a strong power analysis, informed by

individual experiences and understandings. Poor- and working-class white individuals would have some unique contributions to that discussion, but their *role*, or the process they went through in relationship to others, was similar. Because of this, my research shifted to analyze the processes and patterns of white supremacy, how those patterns interact with class, and how Hoosier Action's training pedagogy and frameworks aligned or subverted existing hegemonic systems. Where I was interested in asking about racial experiences, in particular, Hoosier Action was more interested in talking about power and the ways that inequality was sustained in Indiana, and nationally, by political and economic structures that consolidated resources. White supremacy and class prejudices were tools in this process, not only an end result.

If I were to redesign this study, learning from the limits that I encountered, I would have stayed with Hoosier Action longer, offering to serve with them as an organizer, and would have taken a truly grounded approach to the research. Staying longer would have deepened and broadened the research, even offering the opportunity to travel and visit neighboring organizations in northern Indiana and in Kentucky that are part of the same movement and that offer insight into regional differences. Visiting the PICO affiliate in northern Indiana would have offered significant depth to how majority-white movements can align goals with movements led by people of color across diverse contexts. By offering to serve as an organizer, I could have practically supported Hoosier Action's work while observing and reflecting on the outreach responses that the organization receives during canvassing campaigns, for example, or during trainings. In addition, I would have been present at more diverse member meetings or trainings and would have been able to gather data from the member trainings that I describe in this paper.

A truly grounded approach would have set the foundation for iterative engagement with Hoosier Action that may have been more appropriate for my own learning and responding to their work. Through my general qualitative approach, I set research questions and participant demographics before visiting the site. The choices that I made regarding those aspects were partly responsible for my inability to recruit more participants and limited my flexibility in being able to go back to participants after the site visit for further questioning. I believe that, had I used a grounded approach from the start, I may have identified

these limits early on and would have been able to adjust accordingly. This could have resulted in questions that helped me align my perspectives with Hoosier Action earlier, including focusing on power rather than on race or class. I would also have understood the organization's membership demographics earlier on and clarified how my research would be useful and responsive to working-class or middle-class members rather than lower-income members. Another approach would have been to craft a Participatory Action Research study alongside lower-income members or others to begin with their perspectives on issues of concern to them, and work with them to draw out a research project at their guidance.

Jennifer's impetus for organizing with this community was rooted in national political dynamics as they manifest in this region, which is also her home state. Residents in southern Indiana, a region with a large majority (91 percent) of white residents (US Census Bureau 2017), encounter increasing barriers to well-being. As I discuss in chapter two, this includes weakened avenues to meaningful public engagement or political representation. The current U.S. Congressional Representative for the region, Trey Hollingsworth, has not held a single town hall since he was elected in 2016 (Ryan 2018). Over the past decade, these changes have coincided with increased support for the Republican Party, even though they have cut services, including education and public health within the state, and used increasingly racist rhetoric to mobilize for anti-immigrant policies nationally.

Research Questions and Scope of Study

In this context, the question that was more relevant for Hoosier Action might be stated as: *How does a power-based pedagogy in the context of grassroots organizing subvert white supremacist and class division in southern Indiana?* Hoosier Action does work to clarify the ways that racialized, classed, and gendered systems impact southern Indiana. But their starting point for planning and acting is clarifying what power is, how it functions within the lives of their members, and whether or not those power relationships reflect the type of community that participants want to live within. This entails conversations about different experiences around race, class, gender, and other identity positions, but it does so within a dynamic context in which power can shift, and these shifts can reflect the differentiated

nature of each of those identity positions within the context of southern Indiana. The initial question in my proposed research was a good starting point for me as a researcher, but my analysis and focus adjusted as I engaged with participants. Subquestions for this research shifted along with the main research question. Below, I have included an edited list of how those questions changed:

- What are motivating factors for participants in being involved in these efforts?
- ~~How do participants “make meaning” of their own identities, and how are these meanings connected to actions taken toward either conflict or transformation of relationships and material changes in the lives of participants and of people of color?~~
- What are the processes by which identity is shaped within Hoosier Action’s trainings and how do these processes compare or contrast with patterns and behaviors that sustain white supremacist hegemony?
- What impact do local histories and geographies have on identity and on action taken?
- How are actions impacted by a consciousness of personal and social identities?
- What can be learned from participants regarding identity construction for the sake of reconciliation?
- How do participants interact with popular discourses regarding their own identity?
- ~~How does class influence a perception of fluidity or fixity with regards to identity?~~
- How might this information be applied to the wider U.S.? Where is it only relevant to the local context?

Each of the participants in this study were introduced to me personally by organizational leadership. I did recruit participants using a list provided by the organization through email and phone calls. However, I did not receive any new participants through that individual recruitment. I believe that this was, in part, because of the scripts that I used in my materials. These scripts specifically stated that I was interested in interviewing low- and moderate-income white individuals about their engagement in Hoosier Action. Once I was in Indiana, it seemed to me that this way of addressing members, as low- and moderate-income white individuals, was an identifier that some were hesitant to embrace. I sensed a hesitancy not only from potential participants, but from others who experienced economic vulnerability and who I spoke with casually about my research while in Indiana.

I had crafted the recruitment documents after my own experience of organizing with low- and moderate-income communities in Ottawa, Ontario with Ottawa ACORN. While working with that ten-year-old organization, both organizers and members frequently referred to themselves as low- or moderate-income individuals. For Ottawa ACORN, being “working people” or “lower-income”

symbolized a community with shared experiences working together, and who deserved to be heard before decision makers as members of this particular group. Hoosier Action was just over six months old when I joined them for this research, and the organization was just beginning to form a shared identity that might have motivated a person to be a part of the study as a low- or moderate-income white person, in particular.

This research focuses on the perspectives of participants, including two Hoosier Action lead organizers (Jennifer and David) and two heavily-engaged members (Sarah and Alice), one of whom was also a staff person (Alice). While it was not the intended focus of the research, it strengthened the research because those interviewed consistently and clearly articulated what the organization was doing and why they were doing it. Their contributions focused the research much more closely on their theories related to organizing, the values that shaped how Hoosier Action worked, and benefitted from their deep expertise. They had also connected much of their own personal experiences to their work and spoke about their own identity formation from that perspective.

Conclusions

I designed this study to respond to a specific question regarding the role that poor- or working-class white individuals play in social justice efforts. This question shifted throughout the study, guided by the responses from participants and the ways that they prioritized I chose my methodology to reflect reciprocity, understanding that Hoosier Action members and leaders were sharing valuable personal experiences and knowledge gained over time with me. While the research choices that I made shifted from planning the study to implementing it, participatory methods offered the flexibility to adjust accordingly. Guided by Hoosier Action's emphasis on power rather than only on identity positions like race or class, the resulting research offers hopeful insights into how grassroots movements engage local citizens in everyday peacebuilding activity. In the following chapters, I share my findings from the short time spent with Hoosier Action, focused on how they understand their work, how they engage and teach

power in partnership with action, and how those activities impact white supremacist hegemony in southern Indiana.

Chapter 5: Power Analysis

Introduction

Hoosier Action is a grassroots, power-building organization that mobilizes people in southern Indiana to engage political decision makers. They are building an organization across Indiana's 9th congressional district that offers residents support and a strategy to effectively change their political realities. Hoosier Action does this through relational organizing that is rooted in power analyses informed by lived experiences, and by developing capacity within vulnerable communities.

Hoosier Action meets new members through personal relationships. This includes asking friends to host a house party, sending new members door knocking through neighborhoods, or inviting people to events. Through these one-to-one interactions, organizers and members ask people to share their stories with them: what they care about, what makes a difference in their lives. The training for one-to-ones describes this as “the things you need to know to really understand someone” (“One-to-One Training” 2000). Potential members are asked to engage as they are able, including through monthly dues. New members are invited to trainings, where Hoosier Action's leadership introduces its power analysis as the foundational framework for engaging political and social change in southern Indiana. This chapter describes that power analysis and pays close attention to the ways that the training pedagogy includes identity-formation and addresses equity.

Peggy Chinn and Adeline Falk-Rafael's (2015) peace and power model is useful in this context. Drawing from women's collectives from the 1960s through the 1980s, they define power as “the energy from which human action and interaction arises” (64). They describe multiple types of power that are differently expressed in public (often patriarchal) and private (often more cooperative). For example, one way of building power-over in public is through the “Power of hierarchy – linear chain of command with layers of privilege and responsibility,” which contrasts with the peace power of “Power of solidarity – responsibility is distributed in a lateral network of interaction” (66). Groups that are working to transform how power is expressed in their contexts move through a PEACE process (Praxis, Empowerment, Awareness, Cooperation, and Evolvment), that is reflexive and dialectically engaged between power

over and peace power: “To move toward peace, people in a group persistently question and critique their use of both types of power, and shift to actions based on awareness and consciousness – ‘doing what we know and knowing what we do’” (68). As groups move through this tension, individual and group commitments to the shared values and solidarity “point the way to stay on course” throughout shifting power dynamics (67).

For Hoosier Action, power is built through “organized people + organized money”. Members are introduced to power through their own varied experiences, power is understood as changing and dynamic, and members are challenged to understand themselves as actors who always have access to power. The power analysis helps members define their self-interests, the resources they have to pull from in order to realize those self-interests and set campaign strategies accordingly. This includes naming and defining opponents, or ‘enemies’.

Power Analysis and understanding it, defining it.

Power is understood through personal experiences

Hoosier Action does not avoid questions of identity, but it is not their explicit starting point. For example, members are not asked to articulate what it means for them to be of a certain racialized background or of a certain class at the very beginning. Rather, trainings begin by sharing personal experiences, working to clarify power dynamics in those experiences (which may entail identity), and analyzing meaning from there.

From the beginning, power is inherently dynamic. Members’ entry point to understanding power is their own experience, in which they are variably more or less powerful in relation to other people. After describing these experiences, members collectively analyze how they knew that they were more or less powerful during those experiences, working towards clarifying how power was manifested within the interaction. This entails identifying values and structures that make certain positions more or less powerful, or perhaps more or less safe, relative to others. By analyzing power dynamics at play in experiences in which they were less powerful, members are asked to analyze what are often painful

experiences. It may be that many members revisit some of these formative experiences for the first time within a diverse group, reshaping their meaning-making processes in relation to that experience. Together, members craft a narrative around those experiences that entails a personal connection power that can change depending on circumstances. Power is manifested through the varied material impacts that it has in a given context, how that dynamic shifts as context shifts, and how members are variously positioned within the experiences.

Some of the first questions members are asked include: “Think of a time when you felt most powerless. What impact did it have on you?” and “Think of a time when you felt most powerful. What impact did it have on you?” followed by “How do you feel thinking about these two experiences?” (Hoosier Action 2017). While responses are likely to vary, this line of questioning can potentially bring up significant experiences because they entail vulnerability. They are the type of experiences that have the potential to shape identity and make meaning of the world.

Importantly, it also names what is taken or denied to a person, who does the taking or denying by employing “power over” another, and what made this expression of power possible within a relationship (Leonardo 2004). They are asked: “What resources did the other person have that you needed so badly? What resources did you have that you could have used differently to get power in this situation?” (“Power Training” 2017).

From the beginning, members understand themselves as connected to and impacted by power. They interrogate power by better understanding their own connections to ways that power is manifested.

The truth is, however, that the oppressed are not ‘marginals,’ are not people living ‘outside’ society. They have always been ‘inside’ – inside the structure which made them ‘beings for others.’ The solution is not to ‘integrate’ them into the structure of oppression, but to transform that structure so they can become ‘beings for themselves’ (Freire 2010, 74).

Power is not an external force acting in intangible ways but is interwoven into members’ own significant experiences. A person can at different times and in different relationships be more or less powerful. The exercise creates space for members to consider a whole host of dynamics that contribute to power interactions, in part because storytelling about personal experiences is a complex tool that allows

multiple layers of identity to be fully present and develop “...more complexity within the public consciousness” (Senehi 2011, 205, 208). Later in the training, members are asked to expand these clarified power functions to the political systems and social norms that make these types of experiences possible.

Sarah offers one example of what these experiences of power might look like. She remembers growing up in North Carolina during the 1950s:

...I didn't fit with my family, particularly. Because really Lois had an influence on me and ... so I was almost parented really differently. And then we were Catholic in Durham which was like, nobody was Catholic in Durham. I was told I was going to hell so many times when I was a kid, and that, I think ... already created a sense of “I'm different from other people.” So when people started present[ing] me with an analysis or understanding or a history that emphasized, “These are the reasons for difference. This is what's really going on,” I feel like, “Oh, that makes so much sense to me.” ... I firmly believe that emotionality increases rationality, so I think the emotional, I was ready to hear that. And to go like, “Okay, this makes sense” (Sarah 2017, audio 34:58).

Sarah brings up two areas in her early life when she felt different from a primary community. One was her own family. After her mother returned to work when Sarah was around five-years-old Lois, a nurse and African American woman, worked for the family to raise Sarah. Lois had a strong impact on Sarah's life, because Lois parented Sarah differently than Sarah's parents had done for Sarah's siblings. Second, having grown up Catholic in Durham, North Carolina was also a source of difference, as Sarah faced bullying from peers in a largely Protestant state. Because she understood her own feelings of powerlessness or otherness, she was prepared to accept a reframing of these events that included a power analysis when it was presented to her later in life. Sarah's story entailed power within her immediate family, her school, and was connected to broader social systems that privileged white Protestantism over Catholicism. The emotional and psychological impact of these experiences informed her understand of power.

Connected to the impact of experience, power might be familiar even if it has not previously named, in part because the emotional and psychological impacts of these interactions can be long-lasting (Yoder 2005). These stories and the impact on members' lives are connected to motivation for change. Jennifer understands these types of experiences as catalysts a lot of organizers. She says: “...but it's not

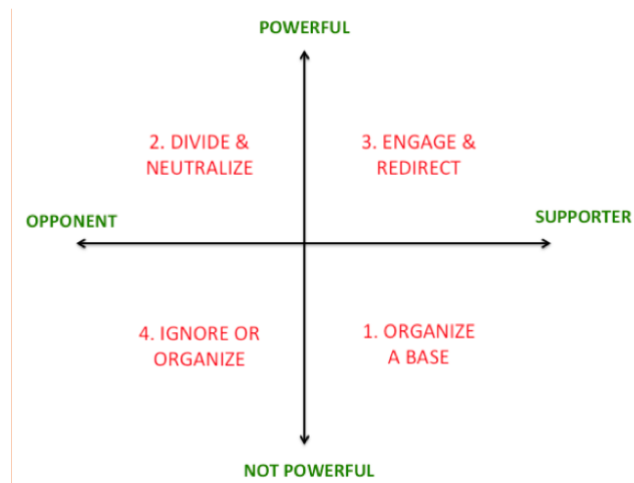
an ideological enterprise, actually. ... It's more like, deep feelings of ... powerlessness and feeling like you didn't matter or seeing that around you.... people come to it from different places, but it's usually ... a set of experiences" (Jennifer 2017a). From experiences of powerlessness comes motivation to realize change, rooted in a persons' survival experiences. This motivation is embodied and personal. Organizing does not ignore pain but makes use of the knowledge and empathy gained through painful experiences. This includes clarifying power, how it works, and what can be done about it.

Using such deeply personal experiences as an entry point to power lays a foundation that members are deeply connected to. Power is accessible, and members are already mobilizing it. Organizing is clarifying those processes and aligning them to realize a changed world. Just as Sarah's experiences of power hinged on religious identity, in this case Catholic and Protestant identities, identity is one line of difference along which power is differentiated through tangible actions, in the case bullying. As a person is asked to analyze resources, power, and the impact of how they played out in these experiences, the very real impact of identity can also be highlighted.

Power is dynamic and changing

Hoosier Action teaches power as dynamic and changing according to context. This is a significant aspect of Hoosier Action's underlying theory of change. They assume that power can be changed, especially if individuals understand themselves as actors who are already engaged in and negotiating power on a regular basis. As members determine the issues they want to work on, they define the boundaries within which they can work, a region or an issue, and identify what constitutes power within those boundaries. Actors within those boundaries, including members, are mapped according to their varied relationships to one another and the resources that constitute their power positions.

Figure 1: Power Map (“Power Training” 2017, 4)



This process helps members define their own and others’ resources. The map in Figure 1 symbolizes a system of influence related to a specific topic or region, and the system holds each of the actors accountable in similar ways. In this way, members and the opponents operate for similar reasons that can be understood from looking at the system from the others’ viewpoint. The distribution of power makes the difference between positions and can be changed by mobilizing resources according to self-interests: “Power is relational, grounded in my interest in your resources, and your interest in my resources. If I need your resources more than you need mine, you have power over me. But if I can make you need my resources more, I can have power with or over you” (“Power Training” 2017, 1). Members position themselves within the system of concern and are not marginalized by it. Members are already in relationship with those who are powerful. In fact, in some situations, they are those powerful people. This provides another level of analysis for the personal experiences visited earlier. Participants are asked to consider what resources were in play when they felt powerless and when they felt powerful.

Participants name resources and how they are held or withheld, clarifying some of the ways that power is manifested with real impact on lives. Rather than asking members to evaluate and analyze the right concept, they are presented with power from their own positions: “...the point of departure must

always be with men and women in the ‘here and now,’ which constitutes the situation within which they are submerged, from which they emerge, and in which they intervene” (Freire 2010, 85).

Resources are unique to the relationships within the region of focus. They are the material or immaterial goods that are withheld or shared to realize certain outcomes or retain the status in a given context. For Hoosier Action, all resources that participants hold boil down to “money, votes, and our bodies (physical compliance)” (“Power Training” 2017, 1). At times, this list may also include “ideas/prophetic belief” (4). These are the resources that carry enough weight to shift actors around the map, reflecting changing power and distributed resources within the context.

By shifting how these resources are distributed or used, power will also be shifted within impacted relationships. Members strategize about how to use their own resources or build new resources, so they can shift their own relationships to power and powerful people. This clarity underlies strategy and planning of organizing campaigns.

Within the power training, those present are asked to identify their region of focus and to create a power map for that region. Individuals and groups place powerful people on the map according to the axes “powerful” v. “not powerful”, and “opponent” v. “supporter”. Each quadrant of the map reflects a different strategy for approaching the individuals within that quadrant. For example members, who are actors on the map, might be placed into Quadrant 1: supporters, but not powerful. There, the strategy is “organize a base”.

Members justify their placements throughout the process of building the map. They explain their choices and trainers encourage disagreement to facilitate a discussion that relies on full group insight as to what makes a person more or less powerful, and the central resources and self-interests that constitute power (3). Since members are also placed on the map, they apply a similar analytic lens to their own resources and self-interests. In this way, power is understood to be constituted by named resources connected to actors’ self-interests and relationships. The result is a relational diagram reflecting either power over or power with, suggesting that power is ultimately dependent on how those relationships play out. As such, power is relational and changes as relationships change, based on the alignment of resources

and self-interests. Overtime, positions on the power map change as members engage systems of power to reach their goals: "...actually that's the goal of organizing, to disrupt the status quo and get people moving around this map" (3).

Emphasizing relationships between all actors assumes an interdependence between the various actors on the map. Even if vast inequality exists between those in Quadrant 1 (not powerful supporters) and Quadrant 2 (powerful opponents), for example, they still operate within a relationship where they have need of one another's resources to meet their respective self-interests. This engaged posture offers opportunity to act differently to change how resources are dispersed and how power impacts people within the region of focus. Real change is possible rather than a far-flung abstraction. Members are part of the change, just as they are active in creating the current reality, as well.

Every person has power and shapes the world

Hoosier Action's power trainings emphasize personal engagement with power, and how that power is dispersed through resources and relationships. With this entry to understanding power, participants in the training are understood as inherently connected to power structures in varied ways (see Galtung 1996). They can be either powerless or powerful depending on context and at different times. No person is always a victim, and no person is without resources or ability to impact circumstances around them. Members are not an inactive 'silent majority' that needs to be motivated or tapped into, they are currently active and are invited to take leadership alongside others. Responsibility for current circumstances, then, rests on all actors, not only on 'opponents' and not only those who are more powerful. Hoosier Axiom 6 says it succinctly: "We determine what's possible, no one else."

David alludes to how this makes Hoosier Action different from other organizations that provide services or act on behalf of certain groups:

And you know, we're just trying to build something and it's in a region where there's very little built, in the sort of way that we're trying to build. Like obviously there's a lot of community initiatives in Bloomington. And a lot of them do great stuff and ... do ... advocacy and public outreach and a lot of good stuff but there's nothing that is doing power building organizing around ... collective self-interest in the same way as we are" (David).

Whereas advocates speak to decision makers on behalf of certain groups of people, or those who do public outreach might offer educational resources about a topic, Hoosier Action is directly engaging impacted people to ensure they are able to act on their own behalf. While direct wins are a primary goal for Hoosier Action, this speaks to the larger worldview that Jennifer, in particular, envisions: “So, I think, ... hopes and dreams is like lots of people are engaged in the world around them and feel like they can be, they can move from being powerless to powerful actors in the world” (Jennifer 2017a). This is reflected in the organization’s structure, in which multiple people are leaders, not only staff.

They connect people, build relationships, offer training, and facilitate leadership across the organization. Hoosier Axiom 8 includes this principle in the container that guides the organization’s work: “Organizers don’t help others; we invite others to join us in taking action around our collective self-interest.” Organizers hold power with others, sharing knowledge, or even familiarity, with the power structures within which the organization operates: “Our job as organizers is to try to understand actors in the external world the same way we understand our family or neighbors” (“Power Training” 2017, 2). This gives a sense of organizers serving as something of a diving rod, or compass, assisting the broader membership to identify power and opportunity where it exists, and inviting members to do the same work alongside them.

The organization’s strategy relies on mobilizing every person and their value. Strategically, Hoosier Action needs a lot of people to reach their goals: “We need LOTS of strategists in our organizations and campaigns, people constantly thinking about power” (1). They understand power to be heavily consolidated on the side of their opponents, and as a result they need a significant amount of creative strategic and innovative thinkers to help realign resources for power on their side of the work. Numbers increase power because they are harder to ignore. Conscientious actors contribute to the work of clarifying power and its differentiated impacts.

Engaging this way can be transformative and directly contradict existing social structures. Jennifer says it this way:

There's a light inside of you ... but there's all this mud that's covering it up and so like part of the work is to ... take that mud off for people. Which is often ... a set of lies they tell themselves around their own leadership: "It should be somebody else. I'm not good enough. I'm not smart enough. I wanna avoid responsibility." It's a bunch of that kind of stuff. ... A lot of development went into me. And pushing and growth. And I do think that's how we develop organizers in [other] people, too" (Jennifer 2017a).

Understanding all people as valuable and capable justifies inviting all people into leadership. Members are not only acting on behalf of others, but with an understanding that their own liberation is bound up with the liberation of fellow members, with all of the difference that is included in that. This subverts relationships, often constructed in service of white supremacy, that set up some (often white) individuals as resourced people who care for others by distributing those resources. Rather, Jennifer and others work alongside each other to clarify existing systems of oppression and transform their own relationships in order to overcome the oppressed-oppressor continuum and enter into an iterative process of reflection and action to become "... permanent recreators. In this way, the presence of the oppressed in the struggle for liberation will be what it should be: not pseudo-participation, but committed involvement" (Freire 2010, 69).

This disciplined and reflexive leadership is essential and is built into the organization's founding principles: "We are disciplined. We do what we say we'll do when we say we'll do it, we show up on time, we hold honest and direct conversations, we don't make excuses, and we don't reward victimhood" (Hoosier Axiom 7).

Actions are strategic and intentional. Yet Hoosier Action does not wait for members to achieve full personal transformation before acting, nor does the organization wait for the perfect plan that ensures a certain outcome. Ongoing reflection and action are necessary steps to establishing knowledge about power and continuing to move toward a broader transformation: "To achieve this goal, the oppressed must confront reality critically, simultaneously objectifying and acting upon that reality. A mere perception of reality is not followed by this critical intervention will not lead to a transformation of objective reality – precisely because it is not a true perception" (Freire 2010, 52). The interplay between experience and reflection is a creative act that opens possibilities not present in existing social systems.

Hoosier Action shapes strategy for as much as they can predict it but do so with an awareness that confronting power can be somewhat unpredictable. Staying rooted in a power analysis that is dynamic offers some guidance in these new experiences. As members become more familiar with power, they gain strategic insight. Similarly, experiencing power through confrontation clarifies organization priorities because they risk certain safety in the act of confrontation.

Power, Anger, and Defining Enemies

This does not preclude real grievances. Each participant described feeling intense anger in response to all that has changed in Indiana over the past few decades, as well as with the national resurgence of racism. They each reflected on how anger served as either a catalyst or a debilitating force in their lives. Sarah talks about the way that media can be overwhelming given how often she sees negative news, specifically related to Donald Trump: “Always like, ‘Oh man, again? Oh my God he says this, he said that.’ ... That is a waste of my time on some level. I can’t change that. ... What can I change? What can I have an impact on? That’s what I need to bring myself down to” (Sarah).

Similarly, Jennifer describes how her anger is something deeply connected to her reason for organizing:

...my friend [says] ... people either organize out of love or anger. ... I guess it’s not so much either/or for me. It’s like ... I have despair about the world. And I’m really grounded in faith. Like I think every person is a child of God and Creation and divine and deserves to be fought for and protected. ... So that despair can either in times of my life send me towards depression ... or ... I can get really rooted in my anger, my anger and love are the same point, though, like it’s good anger. It’s like a righteous anger.

It’s connected. It’s protective. ... and it’s because I feel so much like what I believe and like this life that we’re given and this earth that we’re given is ... *so* denigrated and *so* like what’s happened in the world is *such* a violation of those values. So it’s both like a depth of love for like, people ... and like an anger about, like: “Fuck this shit. This shit’s fucked up.” It sucks (Jennifer 2017a).

Jennifer is clear that her anger is catalyzed because of violations of people that she cares deeply about. For her, anger and love for others serves as something of a guide that directs her to act. By clarifying what she believes Jennifer assigns value, which helps identify duties and responsibilities in response to the violation of those values.

Alice, also, reflects on anger as part of the reason she is engaged in Hoosier Action:

I just have this desire to do more, to make change, to help people. ... I'm just so pissed!
(Laughter) Like, right now I just feel like the world is in turmoil and it's just falling apart, that's how I feel about it. And ... there are so many things that we need to do, and ... I don't feel like I have all the time to do it and so I need to do more and it's frustrating (Alice).

For each of these women, anger helps to clarify what they value, what should be done in response, and what their sphere of influence is.

Framed within a power analysis, anger can clarify values and priorities. Anger also signals that current social systems have been a source of significant pain for many people. This informs the broader Hoosier Action strategy: "The compounding indignities of the last decade, the decimation of the public sector, and the lack of deep organizing offering Hoosiers a vehicle for making political sense of their pain (apart from xenophobic initiatives) has left our communities isolated, alienated, and disengaged" (PICO Action Fund Indiana and Hoosier Action Power Strategy 2017, 2). Hoosier Action offers a political outlet for very real pain in place of other competing xenophobic frameworks.

Hoosier Action is clear that white nationalist frameworks have grown as more Americans experience economic and social vulnerability. They place themselves as an alternative to that movement by focusing on a framework of abundance rather than scarcity:

...the racist politics of scarcity, which is the phrase that I gave it, which is what Heimbach and these guys are trafficking in when they tell white people, like; "There's not enough to go around so we white people have to put ourselves first and we have to band together and stick together and make sure that we're taken care of and then, maybe, these other, you know these immigrants and these black people can get what they – or these Muslims – but like, white people first." That's ... essentially about scarcity at its core. ... Cause if there's enough to go around then there's no choice about who to put first (David).

Hoosier Action's framework of abundance, which names resources available within a given system and works to adjust how those resources are distributed, rests on the premise that there is enough to go around, but that growing inequality has allowed wealthier individuals to consolidate resources under their control and to their benefit. This has drawn resources out of smaller towns and left communities with few options to meaningfully engage decisions that impact their lives.

Hoosier Action begins with this framework of abundance. Hoosier Axiom 4 reads, “Our job is to move people from scarcity to abundance, from isolation to community, and from despair into action.” Abundance removes the need for competition, including competition along lines of race. Hoosier Axiom 5: “Advancing our vision of abundance is a direct confrontation with the forces of racism and hatred and a path forward to a society based on equality and justice.” Removing competition as a necessity erases one primary reason for animosity between poorer people of any racialized background. It responds to generations of patterns in which vulnerable white people fought to divide decent work, recognition within legal systems, control of land, or safe leisure opportunities, out of fear that the presence of people of color would jeopardize these things. David describes what this looks like at the national level, discourse that was mimicked by Matthew Heimbach and the Traditionalist Workers Party:

...the fascinating thing about that scarcity discourse is that it doesn't just hurt black and brown people....it hurts working class and poor people generally... [T]he fuel that ... generated ... welfare reform under Clinton or Regan or, you know, the breaking up unions, or, you know, the rise of mass incarceration. ... voter disenfranchisement. All these things that hurt lots and lots of poor white people. But the essential appeal of them when politicians are campaigning on them [is racism].... it's about 'welfare queens' which is about black women or it's like 'super predators' or it's about ... voter fraud from 'illegals' or whatever.

The appeal ... is either coded, or in cases like Trump's, less coded racist appeals. But the effect of it on ... an institutional level hurts poor- and working-class people across the board of any skin color. ... [S]o part of it, about these stories, is about challenging white people to recognize the ways in which this racist politics of scarcity hurts them. Like, me, I'm on really shitty health insurance cause we don't have single-payer health insurance. Why don't we have single-payer health insurance? Because of the racist politics of scarcity. That's why (David).

Focusing on power and storytelling invites vulnerable people across race to renegotiate the causes of their vulnerability and assign responsibility differently. When relevant, this could include shifting responsibility for economic vulnerability from other vulnerable groups and onto political systems. Jennifer describes how questions guide this conversation when potentially racialized conversations come up around SNAP at the doors: “...usually my orientation is to ask questions: What happens if they don't have SNAP? What happens if we take this away? You try to move people to ... who's actually benefitting and who's actually the enemy? It's not your neighbor, even though your neighbor drives you crazy” (Jennifer 2017a). David connects this to a dominant, more liberal discourse that assigns racism to poor or working class white people:

So I think that .. a super pervasive framework, I might say myth, that a lot of people buy ... especially liberals, is that ... working class white people have to be taught to be anti-racist in order to ... pave the way for them to be brought into political coalition with black and brown people. And actually I think that gets it completely backwards. That ... the way to generate anti-racist attitudes, and I think that this is most evident in the history of the labor movement in the US, is by bringing black and brown and white people into coalition and partnership and personal relationship around common interests, which are often to do with ... economics and ... interactions with the criminal justice system. ... through relationships, attitudes shift. ...

[S]o much of our attitudes towards people ... are based on who we perceive as being on our team and who we perceive as being on the opponents' team, and that the main thing, therefore, is to shift people's understanding of what team they're on and who their opponents are. And then we find reasons to warm to people who we perceive to be on our team (David).

Racialized social divisions have a long history in Indiana, and many are rooted in relational patterns defined during slavery in service of sustaining the institution. Rather than focusing on race, explicitly, as a primary *reason* for ongoing division, moving "from scarcity to abundance, isolation to community, from despair into action" focuses on the *processes* and *relationships* that undergird racialization. Segregation does not exist because of *race*, but because of *behaviors and patterns* of people. By making the division in relationship less normal, in this case by highlighting the damage done to all people because of ongoing segregation, the patterns and behavior might become less normal. This interrupts that pattern and the way that social systems in southern Indiana are constructed by it. Again, David reflects on his own experience growing up in Uptown New York City:

... a lot of my closest friends were black and were Puerto Rican and Dominican. And, so it's like ... the picture of who is a loved one to me, was ... never obviously white in the way that I think people who grew up in more segregated contexts maybe it's ... more of a process to learn to see black and brown people as ... brothers and sisters and comrades and lovers and friends (David).

The training questions around why members do not spend time with people who are different from them, and who benefits from that, invites members to consider these patterns. Whereas the discourse from the Traditionalist Workers Party, like the discourse of the 1920s Klan, would start with race and entrench segregated behaviors, Hoosier Action's focus on abundance removes the need to compete and allows members to imagine a different way of addressing class and race issues alongside one another by mobilizing collective resources.

Hoosier Action's power training teaches: "All of our resources boil down to one of three things: money, votes and our bodies (physical compliance) (and possibly 4: ideas/prophetic belief)" (Power

Training 4-5). Once training participants have mapped all of the actors they can think of on the power map, they are asked to consider how resources are distributed between themselves (in Quadrant 1), and their most powerful opponents (Quadrant 2). This is the primary relationship that the training is concerned with. Just as they did when they placed individuals on the power map, they suggest, justify, and clarify their understanding of resource distribution through these questions (“Power Training” 2017, 4–5):

- What money resources do we give to the people in Quadrant 2?
- What strategies could we use to organize those resources and turn them into power?
- What are the voting resources that we give to people in Quadrant 2?
- What are the compliance resources we give to people in Quadrant 2?

Participants clarify their own resources as they exist in relationship to more powerful opponents. Through disagreement and discussion, members clarify details about opponents, including differences between opponents who are more and less powerful; “just to be clear on the judgment it takes to decide whether someone is powerful or not” (4).

In some ways, this is a process of shaping an enemy, or “opponent”. Hoosier Action takes the time to identify those who are holding power in a way that adversely impacts their goals. They describe people with whom they may have deep disagreements or anger towards. However, the practice assumes a relationship between members and opponents and invites members into what John Paul Lederach calls “moral imagination”:

Stated simply, the moral imagination requires the capacity to imagine ourselves in a web of relationships that includes our enemies; the ability to sustain a paradoxical curiosity that embraces complexity without reliance on dualistic polarity; the fundamental belief in and pursuit of the creative act; and the acceptance of inherent risk of stepping into the mystery of the unknown that lies beyond the far too familiar landscape of violence (Lederach 2005, 5).

Members define their opponents in relationship to themselves. Rather than visualizing a clear dichotomy between opponents, the map reflects nuanced and diverse relationships with varied self-interests. Goals focus on dramatically changing these relationships, but not ending them altogether. Confrontations are creative engagements with opponents to highlight power and realign resources between actors on the map. This mitigates the risk of assuming enemies operate with unknowable motivations. As part of the

analysis, members consider the perspectives and motivations of opponents, a practice of stepping into their metaphorical shoes.

Partnerships, struggle, and setting strategy

Hoosier Action also draws on existing partnerships to inform their work. These networks offer resources to envision the future, offer advice and strategic support, and scale the impact of power-building organizations across large geographies. In the ninth district, where 91 percent of residents are white, this also offers ways to meaningfully partner with movements led by people of color (US Census Bureau 2017). Even if local campaigns are not yet racially diverse, Hoosier Action members are preparing to partner at the state level with diverse coalitions across lines of difference. These networks connect Hoosier Action to broader state and national movements:

It's a terrifying time! And it's exciting, too.... There's a lot of opportunity. There's a lot of space to step into. ... we have counterparts across the country and can be a part of like a big ... multi-year fight-back. That would be good. ... It's like we have two hands. ... You can do what you can with those two hands and our work is in southern Indiana and that's one piece. (Jennifer 2017c).

One primary example of such a partnership is Hoosier Action's relationship with a PICO affiliate organizing in northern Indiana. The faith-based coalition organizes in the more industrial areas of the state. Northern Indiana, with a different geography and strong industrial history connecting it to Detroit, Cleveland, or Chicago in surrounding states, requires a different starting-point than southern Indiana: "Like many battleground states, Indiana is really composed of two distinct constituencies: the north, with its rust belt cities and communities of color, and the south, with its small towns and rural landscapes" (PICO Action Fund Indiana and Hoosier Action Power Strategy 2017, 2). Rather than stretching their resources to expand over these two diverse contexts in northern and southern Indiana, Hoosier Action and PICO are able to target their work to half the state while aligning their power-based focus and goals for state legislative change. Differing demographics and histories both make a difference, here. In part due to demographics, this allows Hoosier Action to organize amongst mostly working class or academic white communities while aligning their work with the deeply diverse organizing in northern Indiana being built by people of color:

If we are successful, the results will be profound and wide-ranging. Not only will we have transformed the partisan makeup of our state's elected representatives. We will have aligned the disinvested rural constituencies to the disinvested urban population – uniting a multi-racial constituency aligned in a common struggle toward a more equitable state (PICO Action Fund Indiana and Hoosier Action Power Strategy 2017, 3).

Members also point to the way that reading or following movements elsewhere led by people of color inform their work. David spoke of learning from Indigenous activists during a brief visit to Standing Rock. Alice speaks about the influence of her son, whose father is black, on her activism. Sarah also reflected on how learning from more mature movements, led by women of color, has changed her perspective on what Hoosier Action is doing. In the immediate aftermath of the 2016 presidential election, when Sarah was overwhelmed by Donald Trump's election, she was reminded by a friend that non-white communities had been dealing with stresses of racism for a long time:

A good friend of mine... said she had been taking comfort from some older black women that she knew who said; "Yeah, right. Okay, this is how we come, these are the things we do. We're in this for the long haul." ...that's the thing about Hoosier Action. ... this stuff had been going on the whole time. This is not us all of a sudden, "big surprise!" ...[A]ctually the seeds for this, planted way back when. This is a trajectory we've been on for a while. So, yay for us for finally getting our act together and doing something. Yes. Good that we're like "Oh, wait a minute. Maybe we need to talk to people in the rural areas." But, hey, we should have been doing that a while ago (Sarah).

Learning from movements that had come before Hoosier Action allowed Sarah to put her own reactions and the work of the organization into a longer perspective, one that includes the immediate moment but also a longer view of the past and future work that will need to be done.

Hoosier Action relies on members being able to identify and navigate power dynamics as they are manifested publicly, including when they are the ones intentionally bringing power to bear in a given interaction. Hoosier Action's power teachings place these experiences of pain within a community and container that pushes for meaningful change: "So it's sort of, we need to ... have an arc of justice. The arc, make sure it bends the right way, right? (Laughter) But it will be a little wobbly as we're getting there" (Sarah).

This struggle towards justice offers a political outlet for pain people have experienced. It invites people to address painful experiences consciously. This balance is connected to Hoosier Action's primary

worldview. Personal struggle becomes meaningful for the individual as well as the community that recognizes struggle as valuable and learns from these experiences for the sake of change. Jennifer describes her hopes and dreams for Hoosier Action:

When I first started organizing I ... was working really long hours and I used to go home and feel so sad, because I felt like we were so far away from this utopian vision. And I finally, a couple years in was like “Oh no, it’s the struggle.” That’s what we’re doing. It’s like you’re trying to get as many people to the struggle and like you’re trying to expand the franchise, who’s sitting at the table, who’s in the mix, who’s fighting, who’s negotiating. That’s the work. And in the meantime, like win real gains but the winning real gains isn’t actually the thing. The thing is like getting lots of people participating and engaged and a part of like, fighting for their lives and their community. ... (Jennifer 2017a).

Iterative power analysis and mapping provides the framework for setting strategy. Members identify resources they hold that their opponents need and identify what it would take to use or restrict resources to shift existing power dynamics. Ultimately, the best way for Hoosier to build power is to increase the number of members, and the number of leaders within that membership. They will need to expand their base across the Indiana ninth district. Until November 6, 2018, Hoosier Action was running an aggressive get out the vote (GOTV) campaign to try to flip the district from Republican to Democratically-led, or at least more diverse representation. They try to balance the longer-term relational organization with transactional GOTV efforts. They continue to build the organization while immediate crises are coming up. As a small example, just while I was with the organization, they were developing strategies to engage members to challenge the planned demolition of 1,700 public housing units and eviction of families living in them in New Albany, plans to close a successful rural school and consolidate the district, the ongoing opioid crisis, and the aftermath of racial violence in Charlottesville, Virginia. Jennifer says about the shifting campaigns: “...we’re always gonna be building power and we’re always gonna be organizing people. But ... it’s constantly shifting as it interacts with reality. So the vision over time changes and it *has to*” (Jennifer 2017c).

Some examples of tactics that Hoosier Action has used to begin organizing and engage issues include:

House parties, which was how Jennifer began laying the foundation for Hoosier Action before she moved back to Indiana. Through the winter and spring of 2017, she returned to Bloomington for 14 house parties to gather information and recruit initial members. House parties are still a strategy for recruitment, gleaning information on what people are dealing with, the values that motivate people, and simply to know more about the people living in Indiana's 9th District and their circumstances.

One-to-one meetings are a primary recruitment tool and take place most often at people's homes. Through door-knocking canvasses, Hoosier Action members target neighborhoods, which are often lower-income areas, to ask people to share some of their own story and invite people to be involved with Hoosier Action. These conversations might be opened with a petition or general question about the families on the other side of the door related to a particular policy area like health care or food security.

Public housing residents in New Albany, Indiana organized a children's march in response to city plans to demolish 1,700 public housing units. To make public the impact of demolishing these units without a plan to fully replace them for all tenants, children who live in the units marched in the city's annual Harvest Festival Parade. They held a sign that read "We Are New Albany", sending the message that they are an integral part of the city and should not be pushed from their homes.

Video interviews and commercials are used to gather stories and share them more broadly. Some of these stories are filmed at people's doors. During their Medicaid campaign, members interviewed people about their experiences with health care in Indiana. In New Albany, three community leaders sat for one-hour filmed interviews, with footage that was distilled into commercials and aired on Facebook targeting local New Albany profiles.

Office sit-ins targeting federal representatives in both their national and local offices. Hoosier Action members occupied Senator Joe Donnelly's Washington, DC office before a vote to repeal the Affordable Care Act. Some Hoosier Action members were arrested during this sit-in. Members of Hoosier Action's Indiana University Chapter, Campus Action for Democracy, held a sit-in at the Greenwood, Indiana office of Congressman Trey Hollingsworth before a vote on a tax bill that would

have ended tax deductions for interest payments on student loans. The group stayed in the office overnight and were locked in while the office closed.

Community meetings take place to address broad issues of concern. Hoosier Action held a large, 200 person meeting in the days following white supremacist rallies in Charlottesville, Virginia. This meeting focused on the role that white Hoosiers can play in challenging white supremacy, how long-term organizing efforts focused on power are part of the solution and catalyzing new Hoosier Action chapters in the ninth district. Hoosier Action also planned and held town hall meetings with candidates for the 2018 Indiana 9th primary. While the town halls were open to candidates from both political parties, the incumbent Republican representative, Trey Hollingsworth, never attended.

Phone banking serves outreach and follow-up purposes. After the community meeting about white supremacy, Hoosier Action called every person who attended to gather feedback on their thoughts about the meeting.

Voter Engagement. This is a wide category that includes other strategies like door-knocking, house parties, and phone banking. In preparation for the 2018 midterm election, 500 Hoosier Action volunteers were trained for political outreach three hours a week. The organization's goal was to accomplish 25,500 hours of volunteer work before the election. To increase voter turn-out amongst Indiana University students, the IU chapter is working to secure an on-campus Early Voting Center.

Advocacy around numerous issues, and to every level of government, on the issues of concern. This includes visits to representatives' offices, and email and phone campaigns.

Findings and Conclusions

Hoosier Action's work is built around a belief in every person's value and agency. For some, experiences of intense pain and struggle draw together deep love and deep anger at oppressive realities, violating a person's inherent value. Members work for structural change that would align political policies and systems with that value. This draws members into praxis that requires them to define their own values and express them publicly as individuals and as a collective. Personal transformation and

social transformation are interdependent, each informing the other, and individuals are challenged to increasingly incorporate peacebuilding actions into their own lives as they work to transform broader social systems alongside others. In this sense, Hoosier Action asks members to continually struggle with the both/and nature of social transformation, in which individual and systemic issues are addressed together.

Since power inequality is central to marginalizing or oppressive experiences, committing to changing power distribution in the region is essential for social transformation. Understanding how power works and is distributed is essential for building an effective strategy. Members work together to clarify how their own lives interact with power, from more powerful and less powerful positions in every individual's life. This makes space for understanding individual positioning not as static but as functioning in relationship to others and inherently already informed by power. From the beginning, power is understood as variable, every person is understood to have some access to power, and no person is always a victim or always a perpetrator. Personal examples root power analyses in their material impacts, and help members clarify what dynamics impact the differentiated distribution of resources.

In this sense, an individual's diversity is essential to understanding how power functions. Rather than focusing on a single identity position like a person's whiteness, for example, an individual's experiences of race, class, gender, ability, or sexuality are all relevant for their experiences of the world around them. Power is shifting and dynamic not only between people based on difference but for every individual because of the diversity inherent in their own experiences. Members are better able to clarify how power functions depending on context and potentially expand their awareness to how others are impacted by the same systems because they understand power through their own diverse experiences. For white people, experiences of vulnerability like poverty are valuable in this sense. Their experiences of marginalization, including a lived understanding of what constitutes power and how it is distributed in relationship to their various marginalized positions, are important for building collective knowledge around how power functions but also in helping these individuals become more aware of how power changes depending on different experiences. This lays the groundwork for understanding oppression for

people across difference and opens up possibilities to discuss how lower-income people across race might have common experiences without equating them or ignoring the importance of diverse positioning, including racialization or gender, for example. By applying an intersectional approach to experiences, including the intersectionality of groups often perceived as more privileged like white individuals, Hoosier Action strengthens their work because members are invited to see their own self-interest in a diverse and informed movement for social transformation. Members are invited into a power analysis that places responsibility for their own marginalization within the same systems that impact people who are different from them. This, in turn, can serve as an invitation to realign perspectives of ‘teams’ around material impacts of power rather than only around identity, including race.

By focusing on power rather than on specific identities, Hoosier Action trains members to identify the patterns and behaviors that reconstitute unequal relationships in varied contexts. This training depends on building collective knowledge around interactions with power, and leaders are clear that the actions they take will contribute to that knowledge over time. Even as they take part in imperfect organizing processes, focusing on patterns and behaviors targets action toward disrupting marginalizing practices and assists members to reassert their full selves into spaces from which they may have previously been excluded. This takes place at every level of relation. In interpersonal practices this might include asking for or sharing stories that are considered too personal or difficult to share with others. In trainings, disagreement values narratives that might typically be marginalized by not only encouraging them by relying on them. In public, this might look like meeting with political representatives to share experiences or engage in civil disobedience when those representatives refuse to incorporate diverse experiences into policy decisions. By targeting the patterns and behavior, Hoosier Action can poignantly expose normalized processes that entrench social division along lines of identity for the sake of reshaping them through action for immediate policy changes.

Leaders or trainers encourage disagreement throughout this learning process, relying on diverse experiences to clarify how power functions according to the lived experiences of those gathered. By expecting and encouraging diverse perspectives, Hoosier Action trainings make space for new learning.

Disagreement is an asset that clarifies how power functions in the regions, specifically by hearing from the varied experiences of power that are present in the room. In order for one person within the membership to build a strategy that meets their own needs, which are impacted by unequal power relationships, that person needs to understand how power functions for others. Without this diversity of perspectives and experiences, Hoosier Action leaders realize that their understanding of power in the region would be limited. The majority-white demographics in the region are relevant, here. By Hoosier Action's own standards, their collective knowledge around power is limited if it is not informed by multiple diverse experiences. Leaders play a strong role in this context, walking alongside members as they build strategy based on lived experience, but which take into account broader patterns in the region and the nation. Partnerships with organizations in different regions, including the PICO affiliate working in northern Indiana, help ensure that Hoosier Action's work in majority-white southern Indiana aligns with a more racially diverse organization in the north. Such relationships are built and cared for by Hoosier Action's leaders.

Rooting their work within this analysis supports members as they respond to dynamic and changing environments, and to understand themselves and their opponents in a web of relationships with one another. While members are defining opponents, and the related strategies to change how those opponents act, members understand themselves within the same systems of self-interests and needs as others. Members are asked to consider how their own actions are compliant with processes that sustain the status quo. In a context of increasingly partisan politics, this practice places members in a 'web of relationships' with opponents and connects their own actions to current political realities. Power is relational and changes based on those relationships. Clarifying how power functions helps members navigate changing engagements because they can better identify patterned behaviors, but these engagements in turn inform a deeper understanding of power that members take with them.

While Hoosier Action was catalyzed by the 2016 Presidential Election, the dynamics that they work within have been present for years in southern Indiana. The organization balances present and urgent electoral needs with longer-term relational and transformational base-building. This includes

working within a region that is quite diverse in many ways, but less so regarding racial diversity since southern Indiana has a largely white demographic. They build a power analysis based on the lived realities of their members, which is informed by their diverse positions including regarding class, gender, sexuality. Within a racialized context, Hoosier Action's leaders hope that entering a power analysis through personal storytelling and experiences might open space for southern Indiana residents to redefine "who's team they're on," as David would say, and be able to hear how their own lives and needs are connected to those previously seen as opponents. This could include working between sacrifice zones in rural Indiana, impacted by job loss or outsourcing, and newcomers moving into the region from Latin America, for example, because their own communities have experienced degradation over the years. This could also include hearing stories across urban and rural divides. In addition, the organization's partnerships with coalitions in northern Indiana and across the country allows them to work within the southern Indiana context, while aligning their goals and building power with increasingly diverse coalitions across the country. To be successful, they call their members into personal and collective struggle. Personal struggle 'agitates' member to consider their personal values and align their public and political lives with those values. Together, they use a number of tactics to strategically confront decision-makers with their shared values and shift power within the area of concern.

Chapter 6. Identify Formation

Introduction

Power analysis provides the foundation for Hoosier Action's strategy and is entered through the participant's own experiences of being both powerful and powerless at different times in their lives. Their lived realities are analyzed as a space where power is manifested, and they are actors in that space who can make an impact by choosing how they use their own resources in relationship to the people they are connected to. This work relies on iterative processes of clarifying personal and collective values, identifying how the status quo does or does not reflect those values, and adjusting related resources to build power and create room for change.

Individual members are invited into a collective culture that expects self-reflection and honesty. This is articulated, in part, in the Hoosier Axioms, which serve as container for the organization's work. While they reflect values, the Axioms are functional principles that assist decision making and set the character of Hoosier Action's strategies. They present something of a set of 'ground rules' for the organization and are part of every training session: "We go through them and ... every new member orientation goes through them.... That's what all our members get trained in and grounded in" (Jennifer 2017b).

Hoosier Axioms

1. Organized people + Organized money = Power
2. Relationships are the core of organizing.
3. Great ideas, good intentions, and well-written reports do not change the world; real social change happens through tension, agitation, and building power.
4. Our job is to move people from scarcity to abundance, from isolation to community, and from despair into action.
5. Advancing our vision of abundance is a direct confrontation with the forces of racism and hatred and a path forward to a society based on equality and justice.
6. We determine what's possible, no one else.
7. We are disciplined: We do what we say we'll do when we say we'll do it, we show up on time, we hold honest and direct conversations, we don't make excuses, and we don't reward victimhood.
8. Organizers don't help others; we invite others to join us in acting around our collective self-interest.
9. We are afraid and angry, and the people on the other side of doors across the state are afraid and angry too. We invite them into a different vision for their lives and the state.

10. A well-functioning organization is necessary to contest for power.

The Axioms are action oriented and functional. They set expectations for individual and collective action, and articulate assumptions that guide the work. For example, “We are disciplined” or “We determine what’s possible” are collective goals that rely on individual action to come to fruition. This is a vision of communal health that relies on individual members being willing to commit to personal development. Members are expected to take on self-reflection and to bring their theories about change, their anger and fear, to this communal space where these closely-held ideas and emotions will be held up to a power analysis and potentially to ‘agitation’.

Storytelling, Building Community, and Political Engagement amid Precarity

Jennifer speaks of this work as creating a home: “I think I have a vision of people ... finding a home inside this organization. ... it’s a safe place but it’s also a place of growth and pushing people towards greater leadership building...” (Jennifer 2017c). It is intended to be an invitational space where the people in the residents of Indiana’s 9th District can come to fight for what they believe in. Jennifer’s vision is that this community, rooted in a power analysis and supported by the Axioms, becomes a foundational space that is flexible and lasting through various policy confrontations. The community will grow to be substantive enough to respond effectively to multiple issue-based campaigns

As long-standing community institutions struggle or disappear altogether, Hoosier Action provides a space where individuals can work together to effectively shape their communities according to their shared values and meet their basic needs. Jennifer understands that this is connected to personal and communal wellbeing: “[The current context] is unacceptable. And we’re gonna build something that’s gonna A: fight back but, B: give people a home and a vehicle for them to ...take steps forward. That’s like staking some claim about ... they matter and our lives matter and they’re not garbage” (Jennifer 2017b).

Many people have responded positively to Hoosier Action’s invitation. They step into the gap left in the absence of unions. This is reflected in interactions at the doors. During one door knocking

campaign, just before the U.S. House of Representatives was set to vote on legislation that would have repealed portions of the Affordable Care Act (ACA):

...it looked like [the ACA] was gonna get repealed so people were really scared. Some of these places... they would be like “Nobody’s ever knocked on my door and talked to me before.” So I think that was powerful for our members to connect with their communities more, and hear stories, and share their own stories and follow-up with people. ... People ... want that. A lot of people wanna act but just ... don’t know what to do” (Jennifer 2017b).

Not only is Hoosier Action offering a meaningful way to engage political systems, they are offering people a place to be heard, to share their stories, and to hear from others. This relational approach to organizing offers a platform for action that is built through an integrated community of people who have a vested interest in their own wellbeing and that of their neighbors. The responses members have received also point to a felt loss of purpose without longstanding institutions. Not only is community more isolated without traditional spaces to gather, but they also lose much of the ability to care for their own health or education.

In response, Hoosier Action and PICO describe part of their statewide strategy as “offering Hoosiers a vehicle for making political sense of their pain” (PICO Action Fund Indiana and Hoosier Action Power Strategy 2017). These organizations bring the pain and fear caused by the “...compounding indignities of the last decade, the decimation of the public sector, and the lack of deep organizing” to the forefront of their movement, motivating people to action (PICO Action Fund Indiana and Hoosier Action Power Strategy 2017).

In the absence of longstanding institutions, Hoosier Action’s relational long-term base building work offers precarious communities a vehicle for systemic engagement. It takes time to build community, especially in the context of an increasingly divided society. With increasing isolation, individuals miss out on the opportunity to identify common needs and interests. Their pain, and what causes it, can seem like individual problems. Using storytelling, Hoosier Action reaches across existing private/public boundaries through activities like knocking on doors, reaching out to people often isolated, and inviting them to work together on common interests:

So when we're engaging people in becoming members of Hoosier Action, we are not only presenting them with a way to do something, to make a change, but we're also modeling for them a huge cultural shift. That says your pain is not just yours. And it's not, it's not personal pain, it's actually something that's structural. And understanding and labeling that structural injustice puts you in a position to change it (Sarah).

This process entails a significant leap from private pain to public alliance and articulation of that pain. It asks people to contribute to collective knowledge by sharing stories about some of the ways they are most vulnerable and mobilizing that knowledge for the sake of confronting systems that perpetuate the root causes of that vulnerability.

Groups sharing a certain difficult situation or set of experiences may literally establish a community base, power base, and knowledge base through sharing their stories. This knowledge, embraced and shared by group members through storytelling and a desilencing of their experiences, empowers people to address previously "latent" problems and conflicts. (Senehi 2011, 204)

Relational storytelling is present in nearly every tactic that Hoosier Action uses: "So much of organizing is telling your story" (Jennifer 2017b). From opening trainings, to defining values, to door knocking, to meeting with or confronting decision makers, stories provide a connection between differentiated experiences with inequality that highlight not only what is, but what should be (Senehi 2011, 203).

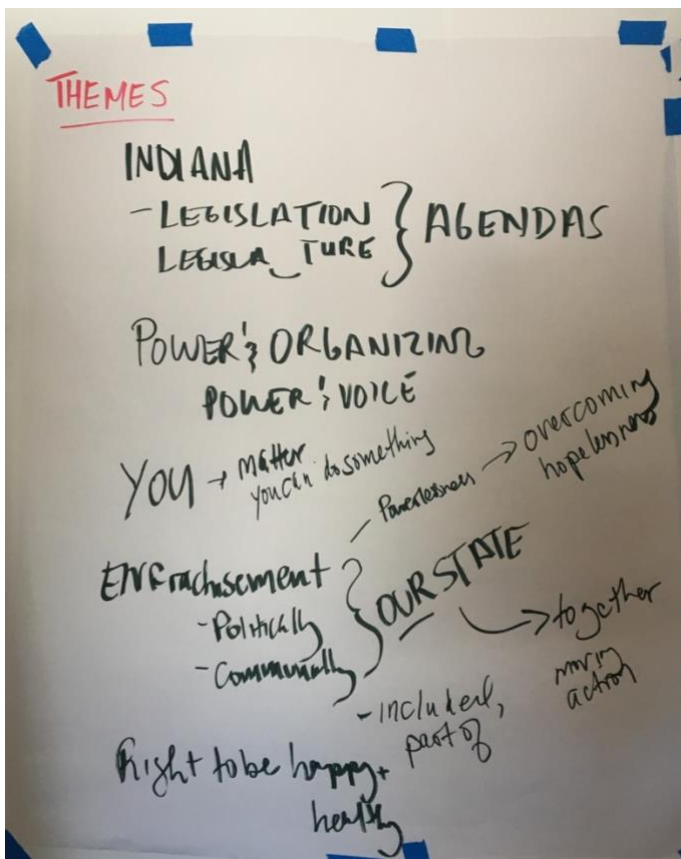
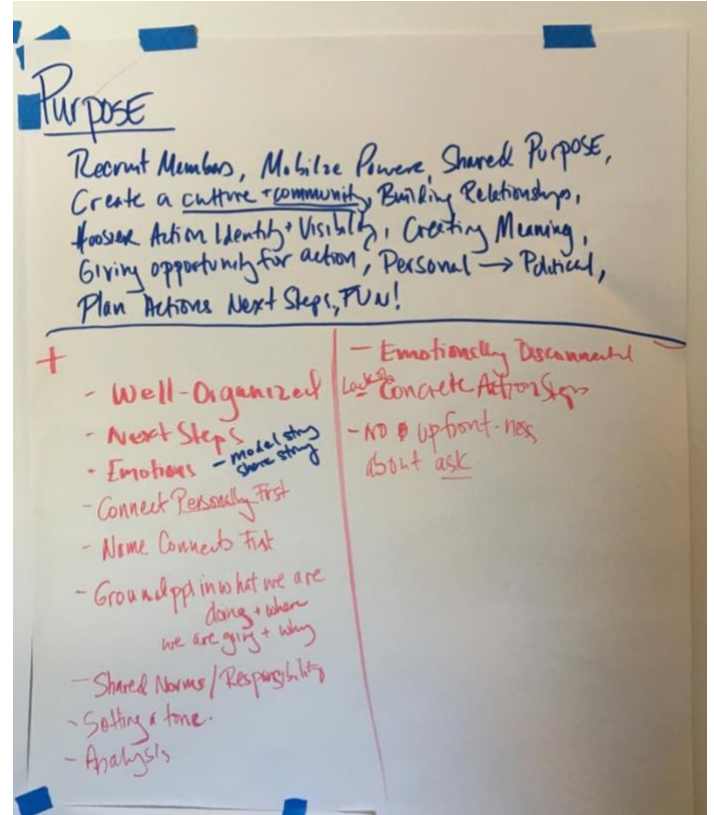
Hoosier Action guides members through processes of determining the values underlying personal stories, gathering collective insight from those values, and using that collective knowledge to describe the kind of Indiana they want to live in: "And then the new member orientation is really about ... what do you want, what's your ... I don't wanna say fantasy ... what's your imagination about ... what a functioning and vibrant Indiana would be? And then what are the values that are behind that? And then why don't we have that? (Jennifer 2017c).

Because Hoosier Action's work focuses on aligning public action with collectively-held values, members work to identify how policy and values are integrated. Notes from members taken before and after a door knocking canvass reflect how personal experience, storytelling, emotional connection, and policy discussions are woven throughout Hoosier Action's conversations:

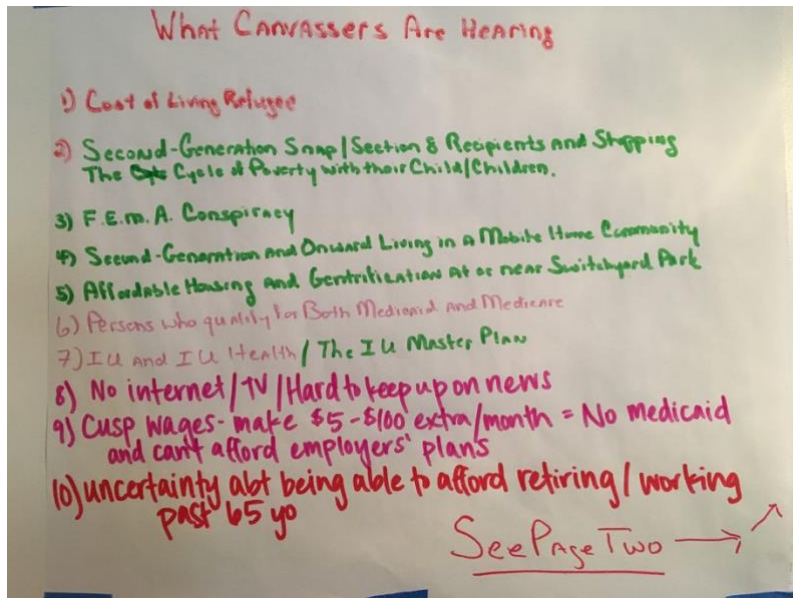
Members articulate the purpose of the canvas:

recruit members, mobilize power, [create] a shared purpose, create a culture + community, building relationships, Hoosier Action identity + visibility, creating meaning, giving opportunity for action, personal → political, plan actions, next steps, Fun!

To reach this purposes, interactions are organized, prioritize both emotional connection and being upfront about their asks.



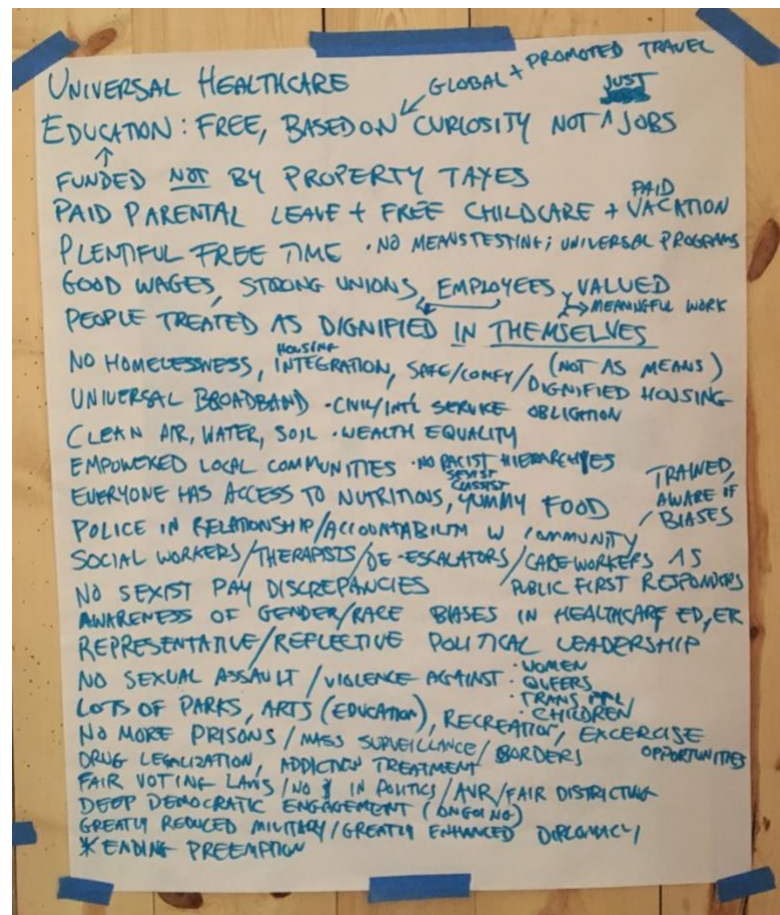
Themes within the conversation focus on legislative agendas within the state, touch on power and organizing, emphasize that the person a member is meeting matters and has agency, discusses enfranchisement and political participation, working together, and emphasizes a right to be happy and healthy. In this way they balance personal, emotional wellbeing with political mobilization and policy goals.

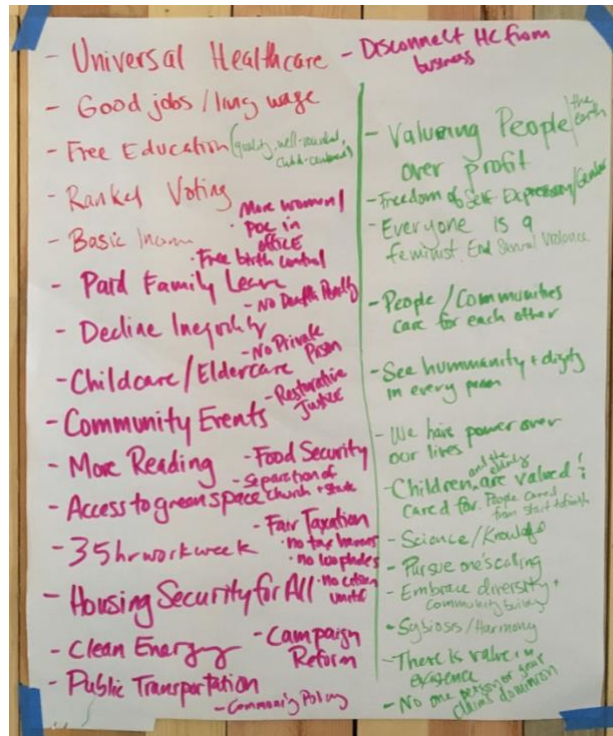


After canvassing, Hoosier Action lists what canvassers are hearing. These themes start to restate stories told in other peoples' words at the doors in the words of Hoosier Action members. This includes hearing about being a 'cost of living refugee', multiple generations reliant on housing assistance and fear of intergenerational

poverty, concerns about gentrification of specific neighborhoods, ways that poverty keeps people uninformed because they cannot afford the medium (internet/TV), concerns about patterns of Indiana University in the city, reliance on multiple kinds of federal assistance or being stuck between qualifying groups (Medicare or Medicaid), general concern about expensive health care, and not receiving enough pay to retire.

From canvasses, and member experiences, Hoosier Action can start to brainstorm policy goals. These goals are interrogated for the values that underlie them, and this facilitates a conversation around whether or not the values underlying these policy goals accurately reflect the kinds of communities members want to live in.





Once members identify the policy goals they want to realize, they work through the power map to determine how they will apply pressure to decision makers and what tactics they will use to do so. Storytelling, integrated throughout the organization's work, connects personal experiences into building power and knowledge to hold those in power, often political decision makers, accountable. This interpersonal work must be connected to changing power but is integrated throughout political decision making. Community and knowledge built through these practices cannot remain in the discipline of only personal transformation or relationship building. Hoosier Action makes clear that unless power distribution changes, then decision makers have no reason to change their policies. They need to be pushed to make change: "...real social change happens through tension, agitation, and building power" (Hoosier Axiom 3).

Leadership: Modeling public expression of personal values

Members are expected to take on personal and communal leadership. Leadership is largely the act of modeling one's values by embodying them in public. Hoosier Action members are consistently asked to clarify why they believe what they believe, and what the implications are of those values for the way community is shaped for them and for others. Each Hoosier Action chapter shapes its own values statement as a way to clarify their collective values and goals, which builds community and provides the foundation for taking collective action.

Translating values into action is understood as essential to making change: "Great ideas, good intentions, and well-written reports do not change the world..." (Hoosier Axiom 3). From the initial training, onwards members are continually asked not to suspend their own ideas but to interrogate them together for the sake of identifying how to best move forward and agitate for change, together. Incorporating disagreement within the Power Training helps to clarify what power is, but also assists in balancing diversity and unity, so that members can develop a strategy that incorporates differentiated experiences of power across various identity positions: "...the concept of mutual recognition encompasses a willingness of parties to engage in dialogue, which must include a struggle to articulate and examine differences" (Senehi 2011, 205). Members are confronted with questions like:

- Why aren't we in deep relationship with people that are different from us?
- Who benefits from that?
- When have you avoided conflict and abandoned your values?

Personal and social agitation are linked. Part of recognizing that members, as actors with access to power, have had a role in building the status quo, even if through compliance. Interpersonal change, especially around inclusion, is incorporated into strategies for structural change:

Those who profess to favor freedom and yet depreciate agitation, are people who want crops without ploughing the ground; they want rain without thunder and lightning; they want the ocean without the roar of its many waters. The struggle may be a moral one, or it may be a physical one, or it may be both. *But it must be a struggle.* **Power concedes nothing without a demand. It never did and it never will** (Frederick Douglass, quoted in Hoosier Action 2017).

Values that may have previously been private are brought to light and analyzed in the context of deeper relationship and a power analysis: "But it's really ... a good practice of ... learning to

uncompartmentalize yourself. And that doesn't mean that you are reckless or indulgent, but it does mean you ... bring your full self into the room and encourage other people to do that, too" (Jennifer 2017b).

Leaders as Role Models

Organizers challenge members to clarify and publicly express their values. Jennifer sees this purpose clearly in the values work that Hoosier Action does: "...I'm hoping that this values summit will help consecrate that even more inside of people...: 'This is what I believe and... I am an active agent manifesting this in public, and I have a public life and I am a public person'" (Jennifer 2017b). Leadership is an act of deep integrity, where personal values are clarified and acted upon in public (Amaladas and Byrne 2017).

During training for one-to-one conversations, leaders roll-play conversations that members will have at people's homes. Visits focus on building relationships with the person visited, largely by asking them to share stories about their lives and what matters to them. The training emphasizes four objectives for visits: Build public relationships, uncover self-interests, clarity for the person being interviewed, and obtain information ("One-to-One Training" 2000). In debriefing the role play, leaders ask participants to admit where they felt like they were taking a risk, and where they "chickened out". Here, too, people to clarify not only what they have experienced, but why those experiences are important to them. All participants consider what made them anxious: "Did you take any risks in your 1-1? Could you feel some tension in your stomach? If so, what was the result of taking the risk? Did it deepen the conversation?" ("One-to-One Training" 2000).

Leaders demonstrate this, even if they are seasoned organizers or trainers. They are the first to talk about risks they took and where they failed to risk. Organizers and participants move through a process of deep personal, public honesty together. Doorknockers are encouraged to delve deeply as they listen to stories. Trainers are encouraged to prepare themselves to agitate those who challenge risk taking as 'nosiness'. A recommended 'talk piece' is:

Look, what we do in conversations is throw out little feelers, usually in the form of half-sentences. ‘After my divorce...’ or ‘Before my son died...’ These feelers are a test of whether or not you *really* want to hear my story – the important bits. People generally do not throw pearls before swine. They do not share the important parts of who they are with folks who aren’t really interested, don’t really care, or don’t have the courage to hear them. The rationale of ‘I don’t want to be nosy’ is not about protecting another person, it’s about protecting you (“One-to-One Training” 2000).

Members are challenged to be bold, to take risks, and to listen deeply to build relationships with those with whom they talk.

...knocking on a stranger’s door is ... a place of risk for a lot of people... you have to, as an organizer, stay with people through that process but I love the experience of ... bringing people whose stories and lives aren’t supposed to matter in our public decision making into the center of that public decision making. ...Whether that’s ... testifying at a hearing or ... the amount of people that ... have never sat down with their state representatives is a majority of people. I love the experience of doing that because so many times I’ve done that we’ve left and they’ve been like: ‘they’re not so special!’ (Jennifer 2017c).

In an organizing or door knocking context, these conversations are with strangers. Doorknockers listen deeply: “A good one-to-one visit is mostly a ‘one-way’ conversation. You should do no more than 70% listening” (“One-to-One Training” 2000). But far from being passive, doorknockers guide the conversation through asking ‘why’, digging deeper into stories, and being willing to listen to understand the underlying self-interests of the people they meet.

As the debrief in one-to-one trainings reveal, leaders are asked to role model what it looks like to align personal values with public action. Given that the topics Hoosier Action is touching on can be points of pain or even trauma for people, this is a challenging process that asks people to bring some of their most defining moments to light alongside others in the organization. Jennifer recognizes this as part of the personal development of members:

...there’s a lot of room for us to grow around ... member leadership, member ownership. ... training and teaching people what it means and what it looks like. Pushing them, people are also, like, I say this in a loving way – slippery. In terms of how much they don’t want to ... take responsibility and believe in their own leadership. ... There’s a lot of like, somebody else is better than me, will do it” (Jennifer 2017c).

Jennifer recognizes the deeply personal work that this asks of new members: “...the very experience of moving people across a bridge from ... victimhood and oppression to active agent and fighter is the huge thing and I got moved across that bridge, worked with people to move them and that’s like deep

spiritual work for me. Which is like, you matter” (Jennifer 2017b). Leadership requires moving through risky encounters that can leave members vulnerable. It entails publicly articulating where and when they walked away from difficult situations, when they chose not to build a relationship with someone new or different.

This is all a bit unpredictable.

All of this entails mistakes and messiness: “...that’s another thing I don’t think people really take responsibility for it is a very messy enterprise. Just like democracy is a very messy enterprise. It’s not controlled” (Jennifer 2017b). Power and the Axioms hold this vulnerability, and the messiness of moving through it, so that members can continue to make decisions and act throughout the process of clarification. Speaking of the messiness, Jennifer says “... And that’s what you’re trained to train people as much as in the power ... cause if people have that as [a] compass it helps a lot. A lot!” (Jennifer 2017b).

Expecting messiness prepares Hoosier Action to engage dynamic issues that are shifting or contradictory. This includes navigating conversations that are racialized when members go door knocking, as they were regarding SNAP. In those experiences, members relied on power analysis to invite the people they visited to interrogate the systemic causes for food insecurity altogether, beyond competition with each other. Clarity around power helps members transition from scarcity frameworks to abundance frameworks.

Because one-to-one conversations focus on listening, understanding a person’s self-interests, and building relationships, the impetus is to delve deeper into what people care about rather than move past it, even, and perhaps especially, if what they care about is painful. Rather than a gratuitous dive into another person’s difficult experiences, Hoosier Action invites people to connect and make sense of their pain within a political framework predicated on abundance. Members guide conversations toward depth and engagement, not to a right answer.

This is a “messy” process, and somewhat unpredictable. In the absence of a correct answer or outcome, the Axioms and power analysis offer tools for decision making. A listening orientation encourages organizers to ask more questions, as indicated by Jennifer’s perspective, rather than offering a ‘teaching’ or personal reaction: “we’re not trying to coach people into a different experience. We’re just gonna ... listen and hear people” (Jennifer 2017c, 27:28). These actions invite relationship over agreement and require organizers to sit through what might be an uncomfortable conversation rather than abandoning it.

David highlights the importance of staying throughout difficult conversations as essential to working on long-term projects within multi-racial coalitions: “...strategically, if [white and black people] are gonna need to be in partnership in order to liberate one another then ... we’re gonna have to learn how not to ... trigger one another. Or, and simultaneously, we’re gonna have to learn how to stay in the room when we are triggered and work through that” (David). Hoosier Action assumes that difficult conversations will come up, and that all those involved need skills, including curiosity and courage, to move through difficult moments and work together after the awkwardness. It is a necessary movement through imperfect intermediary steps from where things are (broken) to where they want things to be (better). As I discuss later, both Jennifer and David reflect on the role that privilege plays in these interactions.

Movement and transition are ever-present for Hoosier Action, in this sense. Transformation, whether personal or organizational, entails moving through imperfection and compromise: “It’s hard when ultimately ... to build power and to function in reality is a compromising act. It’s not a perfect act. It will always be imperfect. Like Obamacare and the ACA, was a massive fight. Deserves critique for not being enough and it was a step forward... Holding all of that” (Jennifer 2017c).

Often, Hoosier Action members and organizers are publicly moving throughout this type of change, opening themselves up to public critique. Sarah connects this to an experience she had at a diversity training. At the training, Sarah cried as she considered her own connection to white supremacist power structures. Sarah remembers a black woman in the same meeting responding with an indirect

comment to the full group about problems with “white women and their tears,” which Sarah experienced as directed at her own crying. After the event, Sarah gave Jennifer a phone call to talk about what had happened. Sarah describes:

...you have to be okay with screwing up. That’s one of the things when I had this experience at this meeting and I called Jennifer afterwards, and I was like “Jennifer! This was so awful!” I felt so *bad*. ... I was kinda like, “What did I do wrong?” And she’s like “You know, it’s just, it’s messy. And you’re gonna screw up. You’re white, you’re gonna screw up.” And somehow that was comforting. You know it’s okay... and again it’s like that’s being human, and being okay with it being messy. And I feel like that’s part of what we’re making a lot of mistakes and somehow that’s also tied to Capitalism, that someone has to be perfect, you know? (Sarah).

For Sarah, this experience taught her that one healthy response to the difficulty of being called out on the impact of her tears, rooted in processes of gendered whiteness, in the diversity meeting was an expectation that growing relationships between white and black people would be messy, and that she would make mistakes. This required Sarah to let go of an assumption of control, as well as embrace less predictable outcomes for her interactions with people of color. This is also reflected in her engagement with the current political environment:

I would say part of what’s happening right now, too, is that the day after the [2016 Presidential] election, part of what I was terrified of, furious about, weeping over, raging about, is that “You mean I don’t control my environment? You mean I voted, me and a bunch of other people, and I don’t control my environment? Wait a minute! That’s not okay!” Whereas, of course, tons of people have that experience everyday. Like, I was slow to the party, you know? (Sarah).

For Sarah, control is bound up with her own whiteness, with Capitalism, and with the impetus to be perfect or conform to idealized patterns of white femininity. Walking into experiences of pain with people, often with different class or racialized experiences, is to let go of that control and expect messiness, and to build the skills needed to foster the relationship throughout. Dr. Vincent Harding reflected on the messiness of these relationships in the context of the U.S. civil rights movements: “To help people take all the risks that are involved in getting to a kind of familial relationship across racial lines. To get messy and connected and involved and angry and sorrowful and everything else that deeply engaged people are supposed to get” (Shenk 2018, xvi). For Sarah, in these experiences, taking responsibility for her own leadership meant letting go of control and responding to inevitable messiness and public critique with integrity. She had to realign her personal values (realizing a more equitable

society), with her public action (how she responded to critique in a racialized context). Leadership and care do not entail reinforcing personal or public boundaries that are comfortable or even familiar, but they invite difference and envision a future in which people who experience the world differently are able to live more fully, together, on the other side of mutual struggle. As David reflected, it realigns whose team you are on.

Linking this aspect of Hoosier Action's work to the personal work of aligning personal values to public action might offer some insight into how the organization's definition of discipline is different from a more typical, organizational culture of discipline. Jennifer describes discipline this way:

...It's called ... sometimes, 'revolutionary discipline'. ... there's a reason why we don't call people volunteers. ... If you say you're gonna do something then you do it. And we agitate people who don't do what they say they're gonna do. ... [E]specially if you're working across culture, class, race, like, that ... radical accountability is all you have, really. ... That's the only thing that builds trust. I mean in any relationships, really ... we're all making it up and the glue between any two people is the trust that, you're gonna show up or do what you say you're gonna do. (Jennifer 2017c)

Discipline helps build trust and community, often across lines of difference. In the absence of relationship, where segregation might exist due to historical division along lines of class or race, consistency and discipline provide a foundation for working together toward a collective goal that does not sustain entrenched divisions. Freire refers to trust as essential to ultimate revolution, in which those who were oppressors no longer understand themselves as primarily generous in relationship to those who were once oppressed, but who trust one another: "A real humanist can be identified more by his trust in the people, which engages him in their struggle, than by a thousand actions in their favor without their trust" (Freire 2012, 60). Mutual trust is essential for change, but it is also inconsistent with existing patterns of behavior that shape racialized identities. Jennifer alludes to this work: "we're all making it up", a community of people building new relationships across different positions that can be entrenched. Lederach's moral imagination connects it to "...the capacity to imagine something rooted in the challenge of the real world yet capable of giving birth to that which does not yet exist" (29).

Organizers, and Jennifer in particular, will 'agitate' members when they do not follow through on this aspect of the Axioms. It is part of the of honest personal confrontation with values and how those

values are embodied publicly. Shaping character is interlinked with shaping the culture and work of the organization as a whole. Members are supported as they bring their emotions and material realities into Hoosier Action, uncompartmentalizing their lives as a necessary part of the work. Discipline includes being willing to be emotionally present. For Hoosier Action, this is part of leadership and taking responsibility for your life. It requires courage and serves as an explicit tool for community-building across diverse coalitions.

Confrontation

Risk and confrontation become central aspects of Hoosier Action's work because they are an inherent outcome of living publicly. The lead organizers attribute this both to their understanding of what it takes to shift social systems on a large scale, and to the inherent character of their methods. Hoosier Axiom 5 reads: "Advancing our vision of abundance is a direct confrontation with the forces of racism and hatred and a path forward to a society based on equality and justice." Their work to build a coalition across lines of race and class is a direct threat to the status quo, which requires social division to consolidate power.

Confrontation and risk are again both personal and public dynamics. As members are invited to interrogate their own values and desires alongside others, they are vulnerable to other people's reactions to their experiences. For many white people, conversations around race and poverty can be difficult. As Sarah's earlier experiences with being indirectly chastised for her 'white woman's tears' attest to, a behavior that seemed neutral or even appropriate from her perspective was loaded with racialized tensions within that particular racially diverse gathering. This can also be true for class, where 'goodness' can be defined in terms of academic expertise or theoretical understanding. This might be especially true in Bloomington, a college town where success and social approval can be closely aligned with academic expertise and relative liberalism.

Members confront these patterns within themselves, including in ways they have sustained or benefitted from social division. Doing this within a new community is vulnerable and calling people into

this process shapes community boundaries. There is explicit pressure through both accountability and encouragement to do this difficult work collectively. Self-confrontation is an aspect of the risks members take alongside one another:

I think that, again, part of the powerful and often deeply frustrating characteristic of nonviolent struggle at its best: it demands a self-reflective approach. You're not always just looking there at the enemy or the enemy structures or the enemy politics. At every moment you're looking at yourself and asking who you are (Dr. Vincent Harding, quoted in Shenk 2018, 64).

This type of self-reflection and honesty is expected, is agitated for, and partly defines group boundaries. For Jennifer, it has been a defining characteristic of her own journey within organizing indicates seriousness to the struggle and long-term work of social change. In a way, this process replaces static characteristics of goodness (expert knowledge, rationality), with relational behaviors (taking risks, being emotionally present). This builds community around mutual experience, commitment to act, take personal and social risks, and constructs shared values.

Some training conversations, like “Who benefits from this?”, address responsibility for social division by pointing to structural power inequalities. Individuals are central to analysis in so far as their compliance to unjust systems allows ongoing systemic injustice: “As long as the oppressed remain unaware of the causes of their condition, the fatalistically ‘accept’ their exploitation” (Freire 2012, 64). While responding to social inequality entails self-reflection and adjustment, this internal process is not the primary course of action and neither is this process happening along any single identity position. Instead, individuals are invited to see themselves as variably on multiple sides of power and working from a common humanity. Similarly, ‘enemies’, or highly powerful decision makers, are not uncomplicated people disconnected from some of the same pressures that motivate Hoosier Action members. During the power-mapping exercise, organizers guide members toward identifying decision makers’ lines of accountability and self-interests. They are understood as moveable and nuanced according to those self-interests. What’s more, they are reachable. Hoosier Action members are capable actors who can make change.

Confrontation helps clarify how power functions systemically and how it plays out in relationship to varied identity positions. Whether speaking publicly or bringing individuals before their congressional representatives, Jennifer looks for ways to place people in the center of systems and locations from which they are marginalized. This can be unpredictable because boundaries like this are policed, sometimes literally, with potentially serious consequences like retaliation or arrest. Hoosier Action leaders also understand that these moments are important to clarify self-understanding:

...we don't do ... confrontation for confrontation's sake. It's always ... in the name of some bigger strategic act. But it does ... clarify what you believe in. It disabuses ... the notion of like, things just happen. [Powerful decision makers] are architects of our world and we wanna be architects, too. And there are forces working against us ... unfortunately that like, profit and benefit from ... oppression and subjugation of others. That's important for people to know and I think it's a bodily knowledge. ... it's also not individual confrontation.

Like we don't send out lone wolves to confront power. So it's something you're doing with other people. Like, I just don't know what builds trust and depth more than that. ... You test people. And I don't mean test like tricking them, you're like, is this what we really believe and like are we gonna walk into this and ... it's like "wise as serpents gentle as doves." So you're not reactive ... [you're] strategic but, but also trying ... to be a real *force* for some good" (Jennifer 2017c).

People come to terms with what they are willing to risk in order to achieve these goals:

... the five people that we sent to DC to get arrested, like that experience was safe. But really pushed them and ... kinda consecrated who they were and what they valued more. In a way that ... a lot of confrontations with power, when they're done well, do. (Jennifer 2017c).

Jennifer is clear about the way that confrontation can realign identity boundaries: "... you're creating an organization where people ... that would never be in relationship with one another feel a deep trust and alliance with one another. And that is really rare and really beautiful. ... And they do that by ... taking risks together" (Jennifer 2017c).

As Hoosier Action takes risks by confronting power, they again move through an iterative process of analyzing the power map, and how it changes the positioning of members and of decision makers. They analyze their ongoing work, even though as a collective they may not call it identity, as they continually strategize in relation to their power analysis, values, and the Axioms.

This type of risk is not dependent on only big confrontations with power. People are asked to confront their own judgements within trainings and renegotiate their past experiences in multiple

interpersonal contexts. In addition, organizing work can consistently bring members into others' private spaces for the sake of finding those who might be agreeable to the work. Door knocking is a primary example of this. Hoosier Action members currently reflect a more middle-class or student background than lower- or working-class. These members had done early door knocking campaigns in economically-mixed neighborhoods, public housing complexes, and trailer parks. Other than an early fundraising canvass, they had not yet heavily targeted wealthier neighborhoods.

At the doors, members use the one-to-one training they have received to introduce Hoosier Action, identify the self-interests of the person at the door, and to invite them to participate in Hoosier Action. Sarah compares these one-to-ones with her earlier intake process when she worked as a doula:

[In doula work] the topic was, you're pregnant, you're having a baby. Tell me about that. And they would talk and I'd ask a few questions but really my goal was to get them to tell me what was going on for them. And then I could share, this is what I want to offer you or what I can do for you. But mostly it's about tell me what you want. And people don't get that very often (Sarah).

Hoosier Action members insert themselves into peoples' private spaces, their homes, and ask for a conversation that crosses the boundary between public and private, safe and vulnerable. This is one reason why it may be difficult to have the one-to-one conversations. Members are being trained to do something that in North American culture can be invasive or even rude. Members can rely on training in which they were coached to identify when and why they felt fear, where they were courageous, and where they chickened out. They are invited to be bold in their listening projects to invite people to share difficult experiences. This gives members a sense of how lower-income people are experiencing their current political reality, what they care about, and what they hope would be the case, instead.

This combination of courage and vulnerability is rooted in a power analysis and offers something of a corrective to classed behavior within the membership. It is modeled by organizational leadership as they roll play the one-to-ones and the debrief. It also requires that members move from a space of logic and theoretical expertise to relational and emotional experience, a boundary that can define class.

Maintaining a focus on power divisions and what it takes to shift power is key for Hoosier Action, and it supports members in both private and public acts of risk:

So I think the culture and the training that we're trying to bake in and the best corrective around [class-based behavior] is to get people really grounded in power. Which takes time. Usually it takes a set of experiences but like, that's our measurement, and that's what our members should be working on growing. That's how we measure things: how much power are we building. And ... we do lots of training on one-to-ones and you have to be curious and courageous. ... And the thing I like about our organization so far and the thing that I hope continues to grow and one of my favorite things about organizing is like you're putting people into rooms together that would never be in relationship with one another and they're working like really getting to know one another. ... Confronting their own judgements (Jennifer 2017b).

This iterative process of personal reflection, clarifying values, and acting publicly builds a foundation for Hoosier Action's work. Inherently, these actions take members into confrontations with the status quo because they are working to build coalition and power where the status quo relies on division. These acts of confrontation consecrate alliances and worldviews around the collective work and begin to offer a new type of identity through community at Hoosier Action.

Findings and Conclusions

In Hoosier Action, both members and lead organizers are invited into transformational organizing that integrates personal and social change. This entails taking responsibility, or leadership, for one's own commitments to align personal values with public expressions and modelling this process alongside others. Building power relies on multiple people within the organization taking on this form of leadership, which includes understanding oneself as variously powerful, moving away from victimhood, and taking responsibility for personal commitments. In this context, all members take on leadership. Lead organizers are positioned to model this leadership, and to serve as a resource to members in trainings and offer insight from their depth of experience regarding power relationships and strategic planning.

By practicing this type of integration, members and lead organizers engage in daily peacemaking work. They consider their impact in the world and in relationship to others, with an eye toward shaping these relationships according to what they want to see. Every person is responsible for creating change, disrupting tendencies to wait on people in authoritative positions, like political leaders, to behave differently. Change begins within the organization through the relational visioning process through which members consider how they want their lives to change, how that impacts others, and what it would take to

get there. Members begin creating that world alongside one another, which brings them into confrontation with the existing competitive status quo.

Emotional engagement is central to this process. By connecting policy goals to values, members clarify how political systems impact what they love, who they care about, and also how those policies can cause pain or harm. The practice encourages members to hold political concerns and emotional presence together. Rather than compartmentalizing daily action or practice from emotional impact, these exercises value emotional integration and resist practices that would encourage compartmentalization. Combined with a power analysis, this emotional presence heightens intuitive approaches to how power functions. Given that members expect confrontation and struggle to be natural and necessary aspects of organizing strategy, intuitive engagement has the potential to guide members in important ways. Intuition, which I am defining as knowledge informed by emotional presence, experience, and intellectual clarity regarding power analysis, can help members connect to tools like the Axioms in the midst of confrontations. It makes previous experiences of pain or struggle valuable because it is part of building this intuition, even as all members are engaged in processes of cultivating this intuition.

This is imperfect. Members are welcomed into an iterative process in which they act, reflect and learn, and continue to act. The organization's strategy does not include waiting for members to become fully realized leaders by this definition, and lead organizers recognize that the actions members take are a necessary part of the process of clarifying personal and collective values because confrontations clarify how power works, which in turn clarifies self-interests. Action and self-reflection are mutually constituting processes. Rather than expecting members to immediately reflect an idealized practice, as patterns of shaping whiteness might encourage, members are practicing ways to walk alongside one another in the midst of imperfection. This is community-building work that requires commitment to one another just as it requires commitment to organizational goals. Hoosier Action shapes expectations around what it means to be in relationship with one another in good and bad ways, using language like "power over" and "power with". Within an idealized practice, lead organizers expect mistakes and hold members accountable to staying in relationship through those mistakes.

This means that most parts of engagement within Hoosier Action, either between members, at doors, or before decision makers, can be vulnerable. Members are asked to act even though sometimes they will make mistakes, when they cannot be sure of the outcome, and while they understand that their existing relationships across difference still embody some of the patterns and behaviors that sustain inequality. All members, especially lead organizers, cultivate the will and the skills needed to stay present with one another throughout these risks, sustaining a collective commitment to shared self-interests. Discipline helps build trust and accountability throughout and is especially important in building relationships across lines of difference that have been historically contentious. Members are asked to practice deep integrity, modelled within organizational leadership but also by fellow members, by consistently being honest about mistakes and changing behavior to align their goals with public action. It is communal work that relies on relationships not only for mobilizing power through numbers, but also through building collective knowledge that informs how a person knows when their actions align with their values. This knowledge is built as members understand how others experience power in ways different from themselves and shift their behavior and organizing strategies to incorporate that differentiated knowledge into their shared work.

Maintaining a public commitment to collective values and vision brings Hoosier Action members into confrontation with existing patterns of governing because they often sustain social division that leads to inequality. As Hoosier Axiom 4 describes, members are shifting “from scarcity to abundance, from isolation to community, and from despair into action.” Long-standing social divisions like racism or classism are tools for sustaining patterns of scarcity, isolation, or despair. Organizers ask members to take personal action to overcome these divisions, including being willing to seek out diverse relationships or have deeper conversations. This takes place in personal conversations, at the doors, or in the halls of state or national legislative buildings and requires that members account for why they may not have relationships with those different from them and who benefits from that segregation. In many cases, bridging those diverse relationships means inviting marginalized individuals into spaces from which they

have been excluded. These can be confrontational engagements with decision makers, and they help build alliances within the group because they are taking risks alongside one another.

In addition to trainings and taking collective action, storytelling is a primary tool that Hoosier Action uses in these processes. Storytelling, and listening to others' stories, happens in personal conversation, in trainings to understand power, through media, and in interactions with decision makers. It provides a container that can hold complex and layered experiences while alluding to what is possible and what should be. This includes storytelling around personal experience that clarifies self-interests and potential alliances across difference and struggling with personal growth throughout collective action.

Importantly, storytelling as an action helps members to connect personal and political experiences, while also leading to collective action for change. It is a personal process of sharing experiences with others as well as an analytic process. Members consider how to best share their stories with others, analyzing them to communicate values and advocate for certain outcomes that are often connected to policy. Story also becomes a way of renegotiating past experiences, clarifying how events in the past were shaped by social or political systems. This can reveal or even apply new meaning to past events, mobilizing past personal experience for contemporary use. Individuals consistently engage with their own stories in conversations with others at doors, in writing for op/eds, and in advocacy at rallies or in meetings with elected representatives.

Story, in this context, changes the teller just as it is mobilized as discourse to serve a social purpose. Members are analyzing their own relationship to experience for an expressed purpose, including building relationships and finding common ground with others. Story might also be used to assign responsibility for wrongs committed and what should be done in response to wrongs. Story's role in building relationships is important, here. Members are sharing stories primarily about their own experience, not primarily to assign blame or define an enemy. While opponents are defined, and various responsibilities are assigned to different individuals, storytelling connects members to their values and their own action for change. By sharing stories of personal pain and struggle in public and to political decision makers, members highlight the injustice of existing policies contributing to that pain. Story provides a vehicle for

highlighting what should be and uses the underlying values as a measuring stick to determine whether or not current political leaders line up with those values. In doing so, story helps members build coalition while accounting for personal and collective needs for social change.

These actions are one way of refusing to comply with social patterns or governance systems that have been historically oppressive, including addressing internalized beliefs and behaviors about oneself that are fostered by those systems. By facing members with questions about who benefits from social divisions like race, class, gender, or other identity positions, members are asked to confront ways that they have been “manipulated,” in Jennifer’s words, by these divisions. These can be varied responses, just as power is varied, but the work is rooted in asking members to believe in their own personal value, refusing to believe lies around scarcity or racialized competition, and to move from a space of victimhood to personal responsibility.

Chapter 7. Conclusion: Addressing White Supremacy

Introduction

By rooting their work in a strong power analysis, Hoosier Action's lead organizers shape an organizational culture that subverts classed definitions of what it means to have value, and pressure for people to present "as if they matter." Hoosier Action's training pedagogy engages members in self-reflection, collective work to build knowledge, and action. These practices invite members into patterns of relationship and behaviors that subvert white supremacist patterns in southern Indiana both through the identity-formation that takes place in relationship to one another, and also in the policies that members advocate for. While not fully focused on the positioning of poor- or working-class white groups, individuals from this position would be invited, along with other members, to consider themselves "as complicated subjects acting within several hegemonic systems" (Razack 2000, 50). In this chapter, I outline the overall key findings of the study, returning to the elements of white supremacy offered in the literature review and describe ways that Hoosier Action's work interacts with those elements. In this context, I discuss the relationship between power and privilege within Hoosier Action's trainings. Next, I articulate future research and practice possibilities based on the research findings.

Laying a foundation: Rooted in power and abundance

Hoosier Action introduces new members to social change through a power analysis informed by personal experience. Members develop a collective understanding of how power functions, from initial personal storytelling through shifts in perspective brought on by the organizations' confrontations with decision makers. This work is relational and invitational. Lead organizers model solidarity alongside members, using the Hoosier Axioms and values statements as a compass. Members consider their own positioning in multiple contexts, not only within Hoosier Action's work or with one another. They also re-envision their own relationship to power and work to realign that relationship to reflect the world as it could be.

Importantly, storytelling is a primary tool used throughout this work. It offers an accessible way to communicate what is important to them as individuals, to imagine the world as it should be, and understand the complexity of each other's experiences. While specific identity positions are not the primary focus, trainings engage multiple identity positions as present and necessary. Various experiences of power clarify how power manifests in various contexts to sustain dominant patterns. Hoosier Action organizers access this clarity by encouraging disagreement and discussion, drawing out collective knowledge: "Rather than erasing our identities for the sake of coalition, we learn from each other's perspective to understand how systems of privilege and disadvantage operate together and, therefore, to be better equipped to dismantle them" (Roberts and Jesudason 2014, 316).

All of this is practiced within a framework of abundance rather than scarcity. Abundance shifts focus from "*Who gets to receive scarce benefits?*", to "*If there is enough to go around, why don't we all have what we need?*" This shifts from identity-only analysis to focus on how and why resources are distributed the way they are. Given that racial differences have been constructed through competition for resources between people of color, including during the growth of black middle and upper classes, and poorer white people, removing the perceived need for competition is a radical opportunity to create new patterns and behaviors in relationship across difference. This is particularly important given the tendency to settle into racialized competition when economic crisis hits, as is exemplified by the Traditionalist Worker's Party and other resurging white nationalist groups. Hoosier Action steps into the gap left by weakened unions and invites Hoosiers to an alternative response that has the potential to meet people's immediate needs through local political wins and longer-term relationships that model new patterns and behaviors across difference.

At the time of this research, Hoosier Action had been organizing in Indiana's ninth district for six months. Their membership base was growing, and they were only beginning to work towards a collective identity. Lead organizers shared a strong vision about what Hoosier Action was doing, what it was working towards, and the reasons for these choices. Their shared understanding that they are offering as an alternative the white supremacy is reflected in Hoosier Axiom 5: "Advancing our vision of abundance

is a direct confrontation with the forces of racism and a path forward to a society based on equality and justice.” Related strategy and tactics will develop and change as they work alongside members. Given that the ninth district is 91 percent white, most Hoosier Action members are white, although not all. Out of strategic necessity, but also out of a conviction that “all kinds of people need something [to fight for what they believe in]” (Jennifer 2017b, 28:42), Hoosier Action organized individuals from any background that would join. This meant that many members at the time of this research were middle class white people. When asked about the economic demographics of the membership, Jennifer emphasized the urgent context and the need to bring in anyone who will join:

If there were lots of other organizations and ... a vibrant infrastructure that was fighting for all kinds of things, I would feel more like “let’s have a niche.” And we might down the road, have more of a niche. But right now I feel like, we have a supermajority, we’re gerrymandered, they’re ... throwing out voter registrations, their messing with voting times an early voting based on D versus R. I mean it’s... insane what we’re up against! [W]e need everybody (Jennifer 2017b, 29:00).

While Hoosier Action’s leadership has a vision for working amongst increasingly marginalized groups, their invitation is open to members of all backgrounds. This is partly due to necessity, helping the organization gain increasing numbers. It is also because they recognize that people with varying experiences of privilege or disadvantage might benefit from the type of work that Hoosier Action is does.

Pedagogy based on differentiated but interrelated positions

Drawn from his year spent researching whiteness formation amongst both white nationalists and white anti-racists, Matthew Hughey (2012b) defines white hegemony as “a kind of implicit ideal against which one’s worth, behavior – and ultimately one’s identity – were measured” (187). He tracked and defined the ways that members in both groups modeled idealized whiteness and pressured fellow members to do the same. Essential to this work was positioning themselves as superior to non-white individuals and marginalized whites that failed to exemplify idealized whiteness. For example, “[Members of the anti-racist group] saw poorer whites with overtly racist tendencies, often framed as ‘rednecks’ or ‘white trash,’ as either unable or unwilling to take care of their property and homes” (75).

By introducing members to power through their own varied experiences, members analyze how and why power impacts people differently in various situations. It invites members to understand themselves as variously connected to power, being more or less powerful depending on the context. By gathering knowledge from the experiences of differently-positioned people throughout the membership, Hoosier Action clarifies what power is and how identity has been used to consolidate power for elite individuals. That Hoosier Action organizers facilitate and encourage disagreement is essential in this process, both in making space for those who experience power differently and also because it subverts tendencies to define any single position as “good” or “bad” in full.

Rather, this positioning is understood within a web of relationships that emphasizes interdependence and agency rather than essentially opposed realities. By starting from experiences of power and then addressing how power is manifested, including according to identities, members have the chance to connect with diverse aspects of their own experiences and consider them in light of changing power dynamics. For Hoosier Action, this structures member engagement so that individual pain is recognized and addressed before challenging primary identities, and then only by placing them in the context of power:

...when I organized in Minnesota I organized ... across race. I worked in a lot of black churches, Liberian churches, and white churches... I think no matter who's sitting across from you, acknowledging their pain first is important. ... a lot of this privilege stuff has been designed by middle-class educated white people, who have been ... really taught to deny their emotional lives and selves. ... [T]hey're coming from a different place. When I go to small towns here, it's not that different. I wanna be careful because it is different, but it's not that different from what I've experienced in ... the poorest black parts of Minneapolis in terms of like, there's drugs everywhere. ... it's a pretty big space of ... despair.

So that's like 1: acknowledging and unearthing pain is really important to do first. Acknowledge people's humanity and the totality of that before we move toward privilege... Cause people can't hear it, either, and ... I also think privilege might be the wrong word in a lot of these...it's like how has race manipulated you? With all these lies? ...and then, so my other experience is like, I could never work multi-racially ...with race as the center of the driving reason why we're in the room together. So it was always like we're gonna work to change the rules around payday lending. We're gonna work to change the rules around foreclosure and then like, through that built real relationships, talked about race, talked about... racialized lending and ... the history of racism in lending and everybody was like “Getting a payday loan sucks!” ... [A]nd you're moving everybody (Jennifer 2017b).

For Jennifer, this aligns with the transformative work of organizing. Moving people “out of a place of ... shame” to recognizing their own value and taking responsibility for their ability to act. “That’s how real relationships were built across race ... through understanding. ... It was ... being in a real struggle, so you had to build trust and be accountable to one another” (Jennifer 2017b). Drawing members together across racial or classed differences did not rely on a reconciliation of opposed identity categories. Rather, members begin relating differently, altogether, subverting historical patterns and behaviors that would have been based on competition for scarce resources.

Members struggle together, confront power together, and identify common experiences. This helps build a collective identity over time. Rather than building a collective identity that will eventually be a strong enough foundation to mobilize taking risks together, members take incremental risks personally, by entering into a deeply personal honesty regarding their relationship with power and committing to align their values with public action; interpersonally, building trust and accountability with others who they may not know and may be a member of a group that they have learned not to trust, or through practices like door knocking and telling their own stories; and eventually through confronting powerful decisionmakers in political struggle to distribute resources more equitably and end oppression. These risks are peppered throughout the process and ‘agitate’ personally and structurally:

So there’s something that you’re trying to hold when you’re building something like this, which is like, at the same time honoring the individual and the collective. ... So it’s ... this dual thing of ... I see myself differently and I see the world differently, and I feel stronger and a sense of hope. And when I hear that reflected back ... the first thing I look for from members is ... when they flip from “you are this” to “we”. And we have a lot of people that now say “we” and like, take responsibility for the organization. ... (Jennifer 2017c).

...at its best, and I always have to stay grounded in this, because it’s easy to ... fall off of this mission. You’re creating an organization where people ... that would never be in relationship with one another feel a deep sense of trust an alliance with one another. And that is really rare and really beautiful. ... [A]nd they do that by ... taking risks together (Jennifer, 2017c).

Hoosier Action’s practice is informative in response to recent Contact Theory studies that show increased contact might reduce prejudices in a manner that also eliminates the necessary dynamics to struggle for social change. Hoosier Action’s container for ‘contact’ entails taking ongoing risks together. The trust built through those interactions allows members to address their own painful experiences while building a

vision for what could be different. This vision relies on the presence and partnership of people with diverse experiences because that diversity is necessary for identifying and contesting existing manifestations of power.

Understanding oneself as differently positioned subverts patterns of behavior that cast people of color as essentially dysfunctional relative to essentially stable white people (Hughey 2012b, 62). Members are never purely victims or purely perpetrators but are “complex subjects”. This sucks some of the air out of resurging discourses of white victimhood, in which white people are cast as a declining race sacrificing wellbeing for the advancement for people of color. Rather, placed in the context of global precarity and sacrifice zones, or of local payday lending, responsibility for social issues is placed on the economic systems and those with decision making power, and members can clarify common experiences across racial lines. Importantly, addressing multiple positions does not remove responsibility for supporting injustice. Hoosier Action does stress responsibility for changing personal interactions with systems of power in order to realize something new and more equitable. To do this, individuals have to interact with their own experiences of holding “power over” others. By diving deeply into those experiences, the opportunity exists to clarify not only who benefits from relationships based on inequality, for example between white people and black and brown people, but also to identify clearly how that inequality is manifested and the impact. They can address what resources taken, who does the taking, and who resources are taken from (Leonardo 2004).

Solidarity rather than Charity

Leadership within Hoosier Action is accessible to every member, and often entails modeling a commitment to personal and social integrity, in which a person is willing to interrogate and take responsibility for their personal engagement with power, and to act alongside others to change the way social systems are organized. Solidarity is essential for this. Hoosier Action emphasizes having “power with” rather than letting go of power or recreating “power over” relationships. Nothing is ever done *on behalf of* someone else, but a person’s own liberation is bound up in the liberation of others.

Focusing on “power with” and shifting individual identities away from an essential good or essential dysfunctional position removes the need for a “white savior”. Members enter into an understanding of power that links their self-interests to those of other members and are aligned with movements throughout the region. This emphasizes mutual struggle in opposition to receiving or giving wellbeing for others, disrupting various models of the white savior, including gendered patterns of behavior for white women that have normalized social progress for white women through helping professions that harm families of color or block access to social progress for women of color.

Related, mutual solidarity troubles empowerment discourses that equate speaking with wellbeing. As members tell their own stories and ask others to tell their own, connecting these stories to material impacts can justify collective action. Stories can highlight the pain or trauma experienced because of social injustices like racism, poverty, or sexism. A focus on collective action draws attention to how distribution or denial of resources made that pain possible. In contrast, empowerment discourses that assume a person is no longer marginalized if their story can be heard, or be ‘given a voice,’ highlights listening to a person as an act of justice or generosity (Zingaro 2016). Solidarity asks listeners to instead pay attention to the causes of that pain and to act to alleviate those causes. Balancing self-reflection and social action challenges charitable positions that would equate justice and helping with listening.

This model of solidarity assumes that Hoosier Action members are diverse and bring differentiated experiences into trainings and actions. It is important to note that some members of Hoosier Action are people of color who have varied experiences in the city in relationship to hegemonic systems. I address the majority white demographics of the region because part of what has sustained white supremacy in this region is the presumed absence of people of color, and the fact that Hoosier Action has received criticism because in its early months it did not yet have meaningful partnerships or leadership from people of color.

With a population that is 91 percent white, the diversity within trainings may be limited. This means that the collective knowledge in the room might not always include the experiences particular to people of color. Leonardo (2004) points out that centering the experiences of white people, only, when

seeking racial justice can proceed “at the snail’s pace of the white imaginary” (141), and might default to “white confessionals”, which often only appeal to white liberals (142), thereby reifying identities increasingly linked to political affiliation. Confessionals also risk justifying those entering confessional space as “good” whites against other “bad” white people, locking actors into discourse that essentializes white identity by marginalizing unideal performances of whiteness. For Hughey (2012b), this type of racial work serves to maintain patterns of white supremacy.

Both Jennifer and David recognize the need to build meaningful partnerships with people of color. In theory, working from a power analysis allows white people of diverse backgrounds to see themselves and their self-interests align with movements led by people of color, even if those people of color are not always in the same room. In addition, white supremacy is sustained not only with patterns of relationships between white people and people of color, but also by sustaining boundaries between “good” whites and “bad” whites and calling “bad” whites into an increasingly idealized performance of race through boundary work. Inviting diverse white people into different patterns of relationship to one another does some important work to shift their existing relationships within hegemonic systems, including white supremacist. Power analysis also works to challenge these internal boundaries:

So I think the culture and the training that we’re trying to bake in and the best corrective around that [classed behavior] is to get people really grounded in power. Which takes time. Usually it takes a set of experiences but like, that’s our measurement, and that’s what our members should be working on grown. That’s how we measure things: how much power are we building (Jennifer 2017b).

For Hoosier Action, expressed by Jennifer in particular, elite spaces do some of the work of sustaining social stratification along class lines, making certain elite cultural symbols and behaviors normative and “common sense”. As Jennifer puts it, these spaces tell you “[h]ow you’re supposed to present as if you matter” (Jennifer 2017b). They do significant work to moderate behavior, separate ‘acceptable’ from ‘unacceptable’, and have prominent ways of policing boundaries.

Jennifer used universities as an example. She grew up in a middle class home that she left on her own before finishing high school. After living independently for a few years, she finished college in Bloomington in her late 20s:

...and I wanted to change the world. Like a lot of people. Be a part of something so then I decided to go to graduate school... I went to Cornell and got in and they gave me a bunch of money. And I went for public administration, which was a really bad fit for me. ... I'm trying to be nice. But it's a little ... training you to be a bureaucrat (Jennifer 2017b).

After Cornell, Jennifer began organizing with ISAIAH, a faith-based power-building organizing group based in the Minneapolis/St. Paul area. She describes sitting around an agitation table with organizers at ISAIAH. This was a staff practice where individuals write a report about their struggles and “every week somebody’s up for agitation”, where other organizers respond to this individual’s struggles with “this is what I see, this is why I’m interested in your building power, this is what you want as far as I can understand, this is what I see you doing that’s getting in the way of that, and here’s my judgement of why you’re doing that” (Jennifer 2017b).

This practice in a workplace is an intense act of vulnerability, trust, and courage. For Jennifer, the agitation table directly contrasts the “professional and perfect” positioning within universities:

But it’s incredibly powerful and builds trust in relationship in a way that I’ve never seen, and for me ... especially coming out of Cornell and having this ... middle class background ... forced me to ... root out ... tendencies toward professionalism and perfection. So I think professionalism really gets in the way of good organizing, which is really about being a whole person and relating very authentically and like honestly to another human. And then, like, draw them out, too. So that was really good for me (Jennifer 2017b).

Initially understood to be a place where you go “to change the world,” Jennifer began to see her time at Cornell as a gateway to bureaucracy, defined by its ability to maintain the status quo. This was partnered with “professionalism and perfection”, which Jennifer juxtaposes with relating honestly and authentically to another person. By highlighting elite academia, Jennifer describes some cultural characteristics that contrast with organizing, and which speak to why power-based organizing can be a space with fewer class-based barriers to participation.

Given Indiana University’s prominence in the region, it is appropriate to consider how elite academic practices shape how Hoosier Action engages class within its membership. Universities maintain prominent barriers to participation for economically or racially marginalized groups. These include application processes that privilege early achievements that are more readily available to youth in wealthier homes, like consistently high grades or prominent extracurricular activities. In the U.S., high

tuition limits participation for young adults who do not have access to either credit or family wealth.

Disciplinary practices allow universities to ensure that all who do gain entry abide by cultural standards set by the institution, and success is most often measured by intellectual expertise.

This can mean that even those from marginalized experiences who do enter into academia might be pressured to present themselves as mostly intellectual, economically stable individuals, whether or not this suits their experiences, personality, or social realities.

The prominence given to intellectual expertise has a strong impact on Hoosier Action's membership recruitment:

I came down here twice before I moved down here and did like 14 house meetings, ... which were a pretty big range of different kinds of people and the hardest house meetings where when they were all ... academics. ... Because the currency of academics really is expertise, like intellectual expertise, which really is not the currency of organizing (Jennifer 2017b).

David describes a bit of what it looks like to organize with the white middle-class, often academic and often liberal, members who are based in Bloomington:

So there's a lot of white people who are liberal and very well intentioned and looking for a way to be useful. ... who really haven't had many avenues open to them so they're ... eager to join ... and require reorientation around a whole host of things including ... power and what power is and how to wield it and what organizing is and how that's different from advocacy. And ... all sorts of things like that but who ... don't need to ... have it revealed to them that racism is bad and a problem that needs to be confronted. Like that's already baked in (David).

This is echoed in Jennifer's earlier descriptions about organizing: it's actually not an ideological project", and it's echoed in Hoosier Axiom 3: "Great ideas, good intentions, and well-written reports do not change the world; real social change happens through tension, agitation, and building power." Pulido (2015) adds to this by describing how the best of intentions might not be enough to stop white people making decisions that perpetuate racial domination.

Expectations that those engaged in organizing or anti-racist work prioritize the right ideas also plays out through "call-out culture", which George Lakey (2010) describes as "...publicly correcting someone who has said or done something that might be oppressive" (75). Lakey connects call out culture to classed behavior. He reflects on the historic ways in which classed economies rely on middle-class laborers as managers of lower classes. He reflects on experiences in which he has watched "activists who

sit alertly watching and listening for someone to slip up, ready to correct them at any moment” and contrasts this with when the same individuals in his trainings eventually “finally gave up the managerial role, relaxed, and took responsibility for their own learning” (77).

Calling people out performs boundary work by shaming people if and when they act outside of accepted group norms. In Bloomington, where success is often associated with academic expertise, assisting those individuals in the academy to recognize and act around building power rather than only having the right ideas can be one way to invite them into more substantial change efforts. It also means engaging a common discourse that misrepresents a theory of change related to organizing with lower- or working-class white individuals. As David describes:

So I think that ... a super pervasive conceptual framework, I might say myth that a lot of people buy especially liberals, is that ... working class white people have to be taught to be anti-racist in order to kind of pave the way for them to be brought into political coalition with black and brown people. And actually, I think that gets it completely backwards. That like, the way to generate anti-racist attitudes, and I think that this is most evident in the history of the labor movement in the U.S., is by bringing black and brown and white people into coalition and partnership and personal relationship around common interests, which often are to do with ... economics and ... interactions with the criminal justice system. And ... that through their relationships, attitudes shift.

That ...so much of our attitudes toward people ... are based on who we perceive as being on our team and who we perceive as being on the opponent’s team, and that the main thing, therefore, is to shift people’s understanding of what team they’re on and who their opponents are. And then we find reasons to warm to people who we perceive to be on our team (David).

David advocates for building relationships in the midst of growing awareness of difference. It is not that one necessarily must be perfected before the other can take place, in this case that working class white people have to have the right ideas before they can be in partnership with black or brown people. Rather, it is a mutually-constituted identity shift that narrates different alliances around experiences rather than only ideas.

Jennifer positions Hoosier Action’s work differently from “call out culture”. Hoosier Action, as people living in the world as it should be. Hoosier Action, in contrast, is working to build power in the world as it currently is. Without drawing a conclusion about whether or not others are doing something right or wrong, she reflects on Hoosier Action’s role in a broader movement.

The agitation table contrasts significantly with call-out culture. Beginning with experience and requiring trust, the agitation table invites people to align their actions with their own stated values and offers to do the work alongside them. Jennifer describes it as “training people ... to sit at the corner of the world as it is and as it should be” (Jennifer 2017c). Rather than some in the group ‘managing’ or ‘supervising’ others, what Lakey calls “the supervisor’s duty of correction”, Hoosier Action trainers invite and encourage healthy disagreement and conflict between various people in the trainings, without controlling disagreement but asking members to harness their knowledge toward a better understanding of power between those in the room as well as “opponents” on the power map.

Jennifer’s description of one-to-ones describe how this emphasis on expertise and value differs from the initial engagement that Hoosier Action has with potential members at the doors:

...when I sit down to a one-to one, I’m like, “I don’t care what you think, I care who you are.” ... But there’s a lot of reward for ... what you think and ... how you say it and how much evidence there is to back you and, it’s just ... there’s no like “you’re a human, your personal life is really hard and you can’t be a human without it being hard and you’re a whole person and your experiences matter and that’s where your expertise lie” (Jennifer 2017b).

From the beginning of Hoosier Action’s interactions, the focus on experiences and inherent value shifts how the organization encourages engagement individually and collectively across difference. By prioritizing experiential expertise and the need for as many people to join as possible, they shape an organizational culture that subverts class-based stratification based on intellectual expertise and the need to manage or control lower classes.

In addition to working on building relationships within the organization for the existing diverse membership, Hoosier Action’s work to address classed patterns internally is part of the work to address racialized oppression. Attention to class is interwoven with attention to race, and this facilitates building trust within Hoosier Action’s existing diverse membership and supports partnership with campaigns and movements across the state and country that works to align strategy into a broader movement, much of which is led and influenced by poorer- or working-class communities who are also racially diverse. This is part of the strength of Hoosier Action’s partnerships with the Northern Indiana PICO affiliate, which works in a more racially diverse part of the state and has stronger leadership from people of color.

Hoosier Action's leadership is attentive to how the foundation they are building prepares their growing community to become increasingly inclusive and to partner effectively with organizations that are more racially diverse. By basing their strategy and training in power, the organization supports political and social goals that align with other organizations that are more racially diverse or and have more leadership from people of color, thereby contributing to a broader, multi-racial movement across the country. This invites white people in Indiana's ninth to address class, race, gender, and political divisions within the district and, in so doing, align with movements led by people of color through solidarity rather than charity or control. Their partnerships structure local campaigns that respond to immediate context, linking these efforts to common patterns across the region and nation.

Messiness and unpredictability

Hoosier Action is clear that their work is messy, that they are creating something new, and that the nature of their work makes mistakes and failure necessary. Using power analysis and the Axioms as a compass helps guide decision making through this, as does a commitment to working together through difficulty to succeed in political struggle. This work undermines classed assumptions of management and control, as well as the common sense nature of oppressive patterns of behavior.

In her research with North American parties engaged in conflict over local Indigenous groups' land rights claims, Eva Mackey (2014) observed ways that, for settlers opposed to land rights claims "...constantly expressed powerful feelings of uncertainty, crisis, and anxiety about the future in the context of land claims. They felt angry about this uncertainty, treating it as unexpected and unfair" (238). Mackey connects these "settler structures of feeling" (249) to the patterned expectation over generations of settlers that the norms and legal systems of colonial states would always and already override Indigenous sovereignty. (240)

Assuming settler sovereignty normalizes policies and court decisions surrounding Aboriginal access to land, which continually position settlers so that they can assume access and use of land in the future. This entitlement to a future expressed itself in the conflicts that Mackey studied through

expressions of anxiety that settlers in opposition to the land claims could not predict what their Indigenous neighbors would do with the land should they have control over it. Degrading Indigenous claims because settlers did not have access to the knowledge of what would be done with the land reflects Hughey's (2012b) work on "exhibiting entitlement to racialized knowledge" in the context of white supremacy, and the classed behavior of managing or controlling others that Lakey describes.

Mackey (2014) suggests that, if certainty is a patterned behavior that normalizes settler sovereignty over and above Indigenous sovereignty, then messiness and uncertainty as two key experiences are necessary to working toward reconciliation:

Living without the entitlement to know everything (and therefore be certain) will likely lead to settler discomfort, a discomfort that may need to be embraced instead of resisted in order to participate in the difficult work of decolonization (250).

In this context, Hoosier Action's commitment to action in somewhat unpredictable ways is a significant practice. Especially in southern Indiana, with our history of pushing out people of color from the land, starting with Indigenous groups and later refusing entry to African Americans. Committing to work throughout the discomfort of unknowing helps create a new context where alternative frameworks for relating to one another can evolve over time. Mackey is quick to point out that this 'risk' is not the same as the celebration of neoliberal risks that dominate economic decisions and have led to broader social and economic precarity. Rather:

... I am imagining a principled, historically aware stance of self-conscious refusal to mobilize axiomatic knowledge and action that have emerged from settler entitlement and certainty. This kind of refusal may open space for genuine attention to alternative frameworks and seed possibilities for creative and engaged relationships and collective projects (250).

This includes working through difficult interactions or mistakes between white people and people of color. When I visited, Hoosier Action had just experienced strong public critique against the organization from some attendees at an event that Hoosier Action held following far-right rallies in Charlottesville, Virginia. Frustrated attendees called-out Hoosier Action on Facebook, focusing on the urgent danger of violent white nationalist groups, the emphasis of class-aware, long-term relational organizing over challenging white supremacy head-on, the fact that the event was led only by white

organizers, and that Hoosier Action had made a call for members and donations. Criticism played out on Facebook, and ultimately one of the attendees did organize a separate rapid response group that would mobilize should a violent rally ever be planned for Bloomington.

Hoosier Action members called every event attendee to hear experiences and gather feedback to inform future actions. Jennifer tried to meet with frustrated attendees offline. Ultimately, the conflict largely stayed online, and little closure came of it. Jennifer talked about some of her discomfort and perspective after everything had calmed:

I feel really bad in a very real way. ... I don't wanna reconstruct the same traumatic experiences that people of color have gone through for their entire lives. And ... that is not ... what I want us to do. And that is the thing that I worry about. And how do we build a white organizations – not wholly white, we're not all white. ... There are so few multi-racial, power-building organizations. I was a part of one in Minnesota. It was 15 years of turning that organization into a multi-racial organization with a lot of critique and a lot of pain. So I try to remember... this is not sitting immune or not a part of a broader history and story (Jennifer 2017c).

It was clear that Jennifer was shaken by this experience. Similar to when Sarah had called Jennifer earlier in relation to the diversity training, this event was characterized by a mix of mistakes and important work that are hard to disentangle from one another. It reflects stepping into new ways of organizing relationships and working for change while those relationships are painful and imperfect:

It's a weird thing to try to figure out how to function inside of. Cause we're not gonna stop. We're also ... so imperfect and there's so many things I would change about that meeting and, ... it did feel like: Okay, our role is to build deeper relationships with organizations. I mean, Bloomington's pretty white but, like, still, with organizations of color so that when something like this happens it's ... not tokenism. There's something real and we can actually do things together (Jennifer 2017b).

I don't know what this [national] moment is. But I'm not gonna presume to and I don't know how it fits into the history of the Left or social movements. And I don't know, I don't really wanna ... just outright critique it. Because I think there's some really important things happening in the world right now. Some of which I don't understand (Jennifer 2017b).

The thing I tell our members a lot is ... we're not an organization that's gonna wait till we're perfect to take a step forward. So we take a step forward and then we learn from that step every time (Jennifer 2017c).

Sitting within a whole mix of things that are both known and unknown, for Jennifer, shifts Hoosier Action into praxis that emphasizes action while things are still complicated and imperfect. It entails mistakes and unpredictable outcomes, yet it also helps open space for new patterns of relationship to form.

Differentiating between power and privilege

Power and privilege play important but distinctive roles in this process, and Hoosier Action works to delineate between the two. This is, in part, because when privilege is situated only along racial lines it ignores the interlocking systems that impact people's lives and from which they operate. As Leonardo and Pulido both point out, focusing only on privilege centers anti-racist discourse around benefits to white people while "...overlooking the process of taking or appropriation, including the taking of land, wages, life, liberty, health, community, and social status. As Leonardo notes, *somebody* must be responsible for racial domination, or 'taking' from people of color" (Pulido 2015, 812). In addition, centering white supremacy makes space to discuss institutional exploitation of people of color rather than only individual benefit (Leonardo 2004; Pulido 2015; Bonds and Inwood 2015). For these reasons, Leonardo suggests that, "a critical pedagogy of white supremacy revolves less around unearned advantages, or the *state* of being dominant, and more around the direct processes that secure domination and the privileges associated with it" (Leonardo 2004, 137).

Hoosier Action's focus on a power analysis reflects these principles and adds to them by highlighting the material realities for a lot of people in the U.S. Jennifer remembers an anti-racist training she was a part of where the room was rearranged so that white people sat up front, as an indication of privilege, and people of color moved to the back. She reflects on how that exercise is an example of a conflation of privilege and power that "gets in the way of our work" (Jennifer 2017b):

Who in this room can buy a Senator? Who in this room can ... get their own plane chartered? Like, yes [there is privilege], but this does not mean that we're running the show. It means that we're manipulated based on our whiteness ... and the currency of whiteness and having that as something that makes us better than other people. We're still being fucked though" (Jennifer 2017b).

By focusing on power before elaborating on privilege, Hoosier Action invites people into a framework for understanding inequality again through their own and other members' experiences. Personal experiences of pain, from various positions, are legitimate and necessary to the group work of knowing more about how power functions. This is a trauma-informed approach, in which the group recognizes pain "as valid, regardless of how the event that induced it appears to anyone else" (Yoder

2005, 11), and the first steps of relationship do “not depend on the public deconstruction of the ethnicity (or any other feature of social identity) of the parties” (Black 2012, 153). Carastathis’ (2013) regarding intersectionality as identity coalitions asserts that subordinating aspects of identity not only risks presupposing coalition with others, but also within ourselves. For any person experiencing structural violence, including poor- and working-class white people, the difficult aspects of going about life as a person experiencing poverty opens up creative opportunities if those experiences are validated, and people are able to grieve what they have lost in order to explore new realities (Yoder 2005, 35).

This emphasis on power does not deny the importance of privilege. Instead, the goal for Hoosier Action is to place it in the context of a power analysis.

...I mean I do think it’s important to know about relative privilege. ...If you’re not clear on ...the ways in which your life is much easier than other people’s lives, then ... you’re much likelier to be oblivious to the ways in which you’re gonna alienate them and belittle them and ... you know, exclude and minimize them without even meaning to. ...

And so, the more you know about the shit that black people go through that you don’t go through, the more sensitive and conscious you can be when you’re trying to be in relationship and partnership with black people. ... And also, strategically, if we are gonna need to be in partnership in order to liberate one another then ... we’re gonna have to learn how not to ... trigger one another. Or, and simultaneously, we’re gonna have to learn how to stay in the room when we are triggered and work through that (David).

From this perspective, understanding privilege serves the purpose of identifying differences in lived experiences so that people aligned across racial differences do not recreate oppressive realities for one another. Rather than a tool for highlighting difference by designating any single person as essentially and always more privileged based on race, privilege is placed in the context of social change efforts and helps clarify how oppressive systems might play out in individual relationships. It draws attention to the relationship and how it is constructed. Rather than getting the theoretical knowledge of privilege down pat before stepping into relationship, this requires a willingness to embrace some failure as a person steps into relationship with others and learns on the go. Hoosier Action’s expectation of mistake and messiness or inviting people to express disagreements or failures provides some grounding and relational tools to move through this dynamic.

Future Research and Praxis

Hoosier Action's work is one example of how grassroots, power-building work can respond to structural violence without necessarily recreating it. By focusing on power, they draw attention to patterns and behaviors underlying unequal distribution of resources, leaving a significant number of people in southern Indiana with fewer options for meeting their own needs. Entering this work through understanding self-interest allows members to work in solidarity with one another, and with regional or national partners, rather than out of a sense of charity. Building relationships in this context lays a foundation for understanding varied interactions with power, what contributes to those different experiences, and diverse relationships to privilege that sustain alliances rather than competing frameworks.

Participants in this research were hesitant to proscribe what might be right in other contexts, or even for the future of Hoosier Action. This was, in part, because of their understanding that they only saw part of the broader movement, and because they were focused on how national patterns played out uniquely in southern Indiana. What Hoosier Action does is not necessarily always best practice for other organizations, including other organizations that make up part of the same movement(s). To consider whether or not the principles in this research hold in other contexts, future research could expand to other organizations within the region, exploring how and why practice differs in various contexts. Given the diversity between the northern and southern parts of Indiana, this expansion could begin with understanding the relationship between Hoosier Action and PICO in northern Indiana, and how their diverse strategies align into a statewide movement. Given the demographic differences between the two regions, this would also provide insight into how power-based organizing in majority-white southern Indiana can effectively partner with a more racially diverse coalition in the north.

Before expanding to other regions, future research would benefit from a longer project with Hoosier Action, itself. This would allow a researcher to clarify how the principles in this research play out over time, especially given the emphasis that Hoosier Action places on long-term relationships and change. Organizers and researchers could consider how the vision described in this paper, set out at the

beginning of Hoosier Action's work, holds as they grow their membership base, incorporate increasingly diverse members, and move through whatever challenges come their way. This research relied heavily on the perspectives and expertise of lead organizers, staff, and a heavily involved member. While each of them was relatively aligned in their perspective of the work, more time spent with Hoosier Action would allow for deeper insight into how members interact with that vision. This would include how and why members pick up some patterns or leave others behind. In addition, Hoosier Action's work will inevitably change over time. This includes changing strategies as they succeed in their work, which would indicate that the structures that they work within had changed and require strategic shifts in response.

Hoosier Action was catalyzed by the 2016 Presidential Election. While they are responding to social, political, and economic dynamics that have been present in Indiana for much longer than the election, Donald Trump's presidency has broadened the public platform allotted to xenophobic efforts because he has shaped his leadership around social divisions. Future research should consider much more closely the impact of this presidency in southern Indiana. Expanding the research to include the Trump Presidency would also expand the relevant geography. For example, Donald Trump has manipulated fears related to increased immigration to build a political base. Future research could explore the extent to which this was consequential for voters in southern Indiana, and how organizations like Hoosier Action, working in a region with a relatively small Hispanic population, is connected to movements for immigrant justice nationally. It would also be important to consider how recent expressions of white supremacy intersect with Protestant culture and theologies in the area. This would provide deeper insight into how Hoosier Action's work impacts national hegemonic patterns that have unique local expressions.

Similarly, this work could be connected to global research on emancipatory rural politics in response to authoritarian populism. As Scoones et. al. (2017) describe, the current political and economic trends in the U.S. are connected to a global rise in protectionist policies, contested national elections, and "strong man" appeals to "the people" that scapegoats marginalized groups, especially migrants. These policies are supported at the sacrifice of civil liberties and environmental sustainability (1). Rural communities in various countries are responding to these trends through creative resistance and

performing research that understandings and supports these efforts could be one part of efforts to build peace through cross-border coalitions. In the United States, this research could also explore any links between economic treatment of urban inner-city neighborhoods in the mid-twentieth century and rural communities in the later twentieth century until today. This could help visualize potentials for urban/rural coalitions, building from the knowledge and experience of long-standing urban organizing.

Finally, this work should continue to explore the personal transformation that participants experience as they find “a political outlet for their pain,” and healing from the trauma of structural violence that includes self-reflection, diverse community, and collective action. Hoosier Action’s leaders and members build their work on the trust that people have the capacity to hold struggle, hope, and clarity all at once. Such an understanding of human capacity resists dichotomies that reserve emotional wellbeing for therapeutic contexts, which are held separately from social and systemic change (Almeida, Hernandez-Wolfe, and Tubbs 2011, 45). Their understanding that marginalized individuals and groups hold unique insight about power, and have the expertise to challenge that power, makes space for trust between variously powered individuals, a dynamic necessary for imagining a new reality in which “power with” is more prevalent than “power over”.

Conclusions

Moving from a power analysis, Hoosier Action works at building a community that removes barriers to participation in diverse political organizing for a growing number of people from increasingly differentiated backgrounds: “... it’s the struggle. That’s what we’re doing. it’s like you’re trying to get as many people into the struggle and ... trying to expand the franchise, who’s sitting at the table and who’s in the mix, who’s fighting, ... who’s negotiating. That’s the work” (Jennifer 2017b). In doing so, they model relationships that combine personal and social transformation that subverts white supremacy in a number of ways, even as they move through an imperfect reality where they make mistakes, fail, learn, and keep working. Interpersonal growth and change happen alongside legislative change efforts in areas like health care, food security, affordable housing, environmental justice, and more. In a context of

ongoing precarity due to the consolidation of power with elites in Indiana and nationally, Hoosier Action fills a gap left with weakened unions and degraded social systems that have challenged the expectations for generations of working-class people in rural and urban areas throughout the country. While the goals are long-term goals, this methodology of building power across different positions invites community and agency that subverts normative cultural practices that maintain white supremacy and classed divisions.

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Appendix I: Interview Questions

- Can you tell me a bit about what it was like growing up in your hometown?
- What do you remember about how you learned about race when you were young? How was it discussed in your family? How do you understand it now?
- What were some things in your family that encouraged connection? Were there some things that gave you a sense of disconnection? How about with folks outside of your family? What behaviors or actions gave you that understanding?
- What made you decide to get involved with the host organization? Can you describe any barriers to your participation?
- What are you working toward with the host organization? What behaviors or actions contribute to that future?
- Has participation with the host organization changed the way you understand your role in your community? Your relationships with others who are different from you?
- What are your best hopes and dreams for yourself in the future? For your community?
- What are your worries for yourself and your community in the future?

Appendix II: Recruitment Email:

Hello [NAME],

My name is Christina Warner and I'm emailing you because I'm working with Hoosier Action to do some research for my Master's thesis on some of the reasons that lower income white people choose to take part in organizing efforts. I'm hoping that you might be interested in sharing some of your story and perspectives with me based on your work with Hoosier Action.

If this is something you're interested in, we could find a time to sit together and talk about how you started to learn about social justice issues around race and class, and how you got involved in social movements. Here are some details to help you think it through:

- I expect the interview to take about an hour, but we can meet for up to three hours if we need to.
- We can meet at Hoosier Action's offices or another public place that works best for you.
- I'll record the interview on my smart phone and you can have a copy of that.
- Later, you can review the transcript of the interview to provide feedback on it. We can decide how best to get you that transcript when we meet.

This research is totally confidential. I won't share your information with anyone except for the people at the University of Manitoba (my university) who are making sure that I do this research ethically. In fact, the Joint-Faculty Research Ethics Board has already approved the study.

These interviews are only one part of the research that I'll be doing. For the other study, you might see me at other Hoosier Action events or actions taking notes about what I experience there. I won't assume that agreeing to sit for an interview means that you agree to be a part of my notes from observing other events, so if we do see each other at other Hoosier Action gatherings, then I'll ask you if you're okay with participation there, as well.

Is this something that you'd like to be a part of? Feel free to let me know by responding to this email at warnerc@myumanitoba.ca, or calling me at [REDACTED]. We can schedule a time to meet or I can answer any questions that you have about participating.

Thank you for the work that you're doing, and for considering this.
Christina Warner



Ph.D. Program in Peace and Conflict Studies

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Telephone: (204) 474-6052
Fax: (204) 474-8828

Interview Informed Consent

Project Title: Identity formation in the midst of race and class solidarity in southern Indiana

Principal Investigator: Christina Warner, Masters student in Peace and Conflict Studies, University of Manitoba. [REDACTED]

Research Supervisor: Dr. Neil Funk-Unrau, Global College, University of Winnipeg
[REDACTED] (Canadian phone number) [REDACTED]

This consent form, a copy of which will be left with you for your records and reference, is only part of the process of informed consent. It should give you the basic idea of what the research is about and what your participation will involve. If you would like more information about something mentioned here, or information that may be missing, feel free to ask. Please take the time to read this carefully and to understand any accompanying information.

I am doing this study to hear from low and moderate-income white people in southern Indiana about why they are taking part in organizing efforts and how they think about the future they are working towards. To gain the best possible understanding, part of this research will engage organizers in southern Indiana so that I may better understand methods for social change and grassroots organizing in this context.

In addition, this study will include personal interviews with Hoosier Action's members and organizers. By agreeing to participate in this portion of the study you are agreeing to participate in an interview with me, lasting up to three hours. We will talk about your own personal history related to race and class, as well as your involvement in organizing. The interview will be audio recorded on a tablet or smartphone, and you can have a copy of that.

This research is intended to support Hoosier Action and other similar organizations as their members work to reduce marginalization in the United States regarding race and class. Benefits may include identifying barriers to effective organizing, and identifying ways that low- and moderate-income white individuals can uniquely contribute to effective efforts. It will also offer opportunities to highlight your own tools for resiliency and strength-building.

Some of the material that we cover will relate to experiences that you may have had regarding power and marginalization, and which can be emotionally difficult. A list of resources to support you in dealing with this stress is included with this consent form. You should also feel free to pause the interview at any time to take a break and attend to personal needs.



You are always free to end participation in the research for any reason and without negative consequence to you. You can end your participation up until January 14, 2018, when I will distribute the final thesis for approval. You may withdraw by verbally communicating your desire to do so to myself, to a staff member at Hoosier Action, or by emailing me at [REDACTED]. If you choose to withdraw I will immediately destroy any notes related to you or your participation, I will not take any further notes regarding your participation, and I will not use your words or interactions in the final research project.

Your participation in this study will be kept confidential and anonymous. In the final analysis, your words, ideas, and knowledge will be associated with a pseudonym, which you may choose. I will store data in a secure manner to protect any identifying information by keeping it separate from pseudonyms and encrypted on a password-protected computer. The only people who will have access to this secured data are listed on this form. Identifying or confidential information will be destroyed within one year after the site visit, by September 2018.

Participation in this study is completely voluntary, and neither I nor the host organization can provide any compensation for being a part of it.

By November 30, 2017 I will provide you with a transcript of your words and references to your participation so that you can provide feedback and review them. You should feel free to contact me at any point during the analysis and dissemination processes, using the contact information provided on this form if you have questions or concerns about how your words and knowledge are being used in this project.

The findings from this research will be published in my thesis and used to fulfill the requirements for my M.A. in Peace and Conflict Studies. In addition, the findings may be disseminated in published academic articles, published as a book, presented at academic conferences, or shared with other social organizations (including Hoosier Action) that might benefit from the findings. If relevant, findings may be shared with local decision- and policy-makers. Only information that does not identify participants will be disseminated.

Your signature on this form indicates that you have understood to your satisfaction the information regarding participation in the research project and agree to participate as a subject. In no way does this waive your legal rights nor release the researchers, sponsors, or involved institutions from their legal and professional responsibilities. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time, and/or refrain from answering any questions you prefer to omit, without prejudice or consequence. Your continued participation should be as informed as your initial consent, so you should feel free to ask for clarification or new information throughout your participation.

The University of Manitoba may look at your research records to see that the research is being done in a safe and proper way.

This research has been approved by the Joint Faculty Research Ethics Board at the University of Manitoba. If you have any concerns or complaints about this project you may contact any of the above-named persons or Pinar Eskicioglu, the University of Manitoba Human Ethics Coordinator at 204-474-7122 or pinar.eskicioglu@umanitoba.ca. A copy of this consent form has been given to you to keep for your records and reference.

If you would like more information or clarification about any of this information, please contact me, Christina Warner, at [REDACTED]

Participant's Signature

Date

Researcher's Signature

Date

_____ Please send me a written summary of the results of this study at

_____ email or mailing address.

- I give permission for the audio recording of my interview to be used in multi-media presentations on this research. I understand that my voice will be distorted to protect my identity.
- I do not give permission for the audio recording of my interview to be used in multi-media presentations.



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Participant Observation Informed Consent

Project Title: Identity formation in the midst of race and class solidarity in southern Indiana

Principal Investigator: Christina Warner, Masters student in Peace and Conflict Studies, University of Manitoba. [REDACTED]

Research Supervisor: Dr. Neil Funk-Unrau, Menno Simons College, affiliated with the University of Winnipeg [REDACTED] (Canadian phone number) [REDACTED]

This consent form, a copy of which will be left with you for your records and reference, is only part of the process of informed consent. It should give you the basic idea of what the research is about and what your participation will involve. If you would like more detail about something mentioned here, or information not included here, you should feel free to ask. Please take the time to read this carefully and to understand any accompanying information.

I am doing this study to hear from low and moderate-income white people in southern Indiana about why they are taking part in organizing efforts and how they think about the future they are working towards. To gain the best possible understanding [REDACTED] engage organizers in southern Indiana so that I may better understand methods for social change and grassroots organizing in this context.

My primary method for research will be participant observation. I will spend two weeks with Hoosier Action as a volunteer, and will take daily notes regarding my observations and interactions during that time.

By consenting to be a part of this portion of the study, you are agreeing to let me use your words and interactions in my personal notes regarding daily efforts of Hoosier Action, its members, and organizers. You will see me observing gatherings and taking notes at events, trainings, or actions. This portion of the study does not require any additional action from you beyond your consent. I welcome conversations with you about your experiences and perspectives. However, this is not required.

This research is intended to support Hoosier Action and other similar organizations as their members work to reduce marginalization in the United States regarding race and class. Benefits may include identifying barriers to effective organizing, and identifying ways that low- and moderate-income white individuals can uniquely contribute to effective efforts. It will also offer opportunities to highlight your own tools for resiliency and strength-building.



You are always free to end participation in the research for any reason and without negative consequence to you. You can end your participation up until January 14, 2018, when I will distribute the final thesis for approval. You may withdraw by verbally communicating your desire to do so to myself, to a staff member at Hoosier Action, or by emailing me at [REDACTED]

If you choose to withdraw I will immediately destroy any notes related to you or your participation, I will not take any further notes regarding your participation, and I will not use your words or interactions in the final research project. If we see each other at future Hoosier Action events, I will allow you to initiate conversation and I will not bring up the research, take notes, or include those interactions in the study.

Your participation in this study will be kept confidential and anonymous. In the final analysis, your words, ideas, and knowledge will be associated with a pseudonym, which you may choose. I will store data in a secure manner to protect any identifying information by keeping it separate from pseudonyms and encrypted on a password-protected computer. The only people who will have access to confidential and secured data are listed on this form. All confidential information will be destroyed within one year after the site visit, by September 2018

Participation in this study is completely voluntary, and neither I nor the host organization can provide any compensation for being a part of it.

By November 30, 2017, I will provide you with a transcript of your words and references to your participation so that you can provide feedback and review them. You should feel free to contact me at any point during the analysis and dissemination processes, using the contact information provided on this form if you have questions or concerns about how your words and knowledge are being used in this project.

The findings from this research will be published in my thesis and used to fulfill the requirements for my M.A. in Peace and Conflict Studies. In addition, the findings may be disseminated in published academic articles, published as a book, presented at academic conferences, or shared with other social organizations (including Hoosier Action) that might benefit from the findings. If relevant, findings may be shared with local decision- and policy-makers. Only information that does not identify participants will be disseminated.

Your signature on this form indicates that you have understood to your satisfaction the information regarding participation in the research project and agree to participate as a subject. In no way does this waive your legal rights nor release the researchers, sponsors, or involved institutions from their legal and professional responsibilities. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time, and/or refrain from answering any questions you prefer to omit, without prejudice or consequence. Your continued participation should be as informed as your initial consent, so you should feel free to ask for clarification or new information throughout your participation.

The University of Manitoba may look at your research records to see that the research is being done in a safe and proper way.

This research has been approved by the Joint Faculty Research Ethics Board at the University of Manitoba. If you have any concerns or complaints about this project you may contact any of the above-named persons or Pinar Eskicioglu, the University of Manitoba Human Ethics Coordinator at

Participant Observation Informed Consent

3

_____. A copy of this consent form has been given to you to keep for your records and reference.

If you would like more information or clarification about any of these points, please contact me, Christina Warner, at _____ or _____.

Participant's Signature

Date

Researcher's Signature

Date

_____ Please send me a written summary of the results of this study at

_____ email or mailing address.

PROTOCOL APPROVAL

TO: Christina Warner (Advisor: Neil Funk-Unrau)
Principal Investigator

FROM: Kevin Russell, Chair
Joint-Faculty Research Ethics Board (JFREB)

Re: Protocol J2017:008 (HS20546)
“Power, privilege, and poor white communities: A study of identity formation in the midst of race and class solidarity in the United States”

Effective: September 7, 2017

Expiry: September 7, 2018

Joint-Faculty Research Ethics Board (JFREB) has reviewed and approved the above research. JFREB is constituted and operates in accordance with the current *Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans*.

This approval is subject to the following conditions:

1. Approval is granted only for the research and purposes described in the application.
2. Any modification to the research must be submitted to JFREB for approval before implementation.
3. Any deviations to the research or adverse events must be submitted to JFREB as soon as possible.
4. This approval is valid for one year only and a Renewal Request must be submitted and approved by the above expiry date.
5. A Study Closure form must be submitted to JFREB when the research is complete or terminated.
6. The University of Manitoba may request to review research documentation from this project to demonstrate compliance with this approved protocol and the University of Manitoba *Ethics of Research Involving Humans*.

Funded Protocols:

- Please mail/e-mail a copy of this Approval, identifying the related UM Project Number, to the Research Grants Officer in ORS.



UNIVERSITY
OF MANITOBA

Research Ethics
and Compliance

Human Ethics
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Phone +204-474-7122
Email: humanethics@umanitoba.ca

RENEWAL APPROVAL

Date: December 11, 2018

New Expiry: September 7, 2019

TO: Christina Warner
Principal Investigator

(Advisor: Neil Funk-Unrau)

FROM: Julia Witt, Chair
Joint-Faculty Research Ethics Board (JFREB)



Re: Protocol #J2017:008 (HS20546)
“Power, Privilege, and Poor White Communities: A Study of Identity
Formation in the Midst of Race and Class Solidarity in the United States”

Joint-Faculty Research Ethics Board (JFREB) has reviewed and renewed the above research. JFREB is constituted and operates in accordance with the current *Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans*.

This approval is subject to the following conditions:

1. Any modification to the research must be submitted to JFREB for approval before implementation.
2. Any deviations to the research or adverse events must be submitted to JFREB as soon as possible.
3. This renewal is valid for one year only and a Renewal Request must be submitted and approved by the above expiry date.
4. A Study Closure form must be submitted to JFREB when the research is complete or terminated.

Funded Protocols:

- Please mail/e-mail a copy of this Renewal Approval, identifying the related UM Project Number, to the Research Grants Officer in ORS.