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Transformative Community Resiliency: The Impact of Organizing Against Oil in Richmond and Wilmington, California

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TRANSFORMATIVE COMMUNITY RESILIENCY: THE IMPACT OF ORGANIZING

AGAINST OIL IN RICHMOND AND WILMINGTON, CALIFORNIA

A Capstone Thesis Presented to the Faculty of the College of Arts & Sciences

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In Partial Fulfillment of The Requirements for the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS IN URBAN & PUBLIC AFFAIRS

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Under the guidance and approval of the committee, and approval by all the members, this thesis has been accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree.

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To my community – all the work that has gone into this research is for you.

Abstract

Despite the increase in power of the oil industry in various low-income communities of color throughout the state of California, many residents are still seen to be inactive in the fight to challenge this power. To combat this, local community organizations are working to empower residents of impacted communities in order to influence political spaces. To understand the impact communities organizations are having while doing this, I look to Communities for a Better Environment (CBE) and their work in Richmond and Wilmington, California. I ask the following research question to serve as a point of analysis: How do local organizations working against the oil industry organize community members to participate in political action? In this thesis, I argue that through providing residents with tools and resources, CBE has provided community members with the means to articulate their own stories and gain access to the political process. Through addressing the silencing and need for flexibility of the community, CBE is able to create new possibilities for its members to get involved in new and existing political spaces that challenge the oil industry. These practices lead to what I call *transformative community resiliency*, which is a type of resilience that refers to the ability of a community and its residents to shift its voice, understanding, and practices from an individual organizational viewpoint to a multifaceted coalition viewpoint when combating injustice caused by forces of power.

Introduction

The oil industry has held control and power in various communities throughout California for decades. As a result of its progressive state legislature, many individuals looking towards the state believe that the rule of the oil industry has passed and for this reason, view California as a state with comprehensive environmental regulations. This is not entirely true in many cases, as California still remains under the control of the oil industry and has a multitude of communities that are both influenced and impacted. The control of the oil industry in various locations throughout California is in the form of extreme financial and political power, with companies having a large say in what happens in communities and what of their industry is regulated. In 2009, California's greenhouse gas emissions, produced by the refineries across the state, made up nearly half of the overall emissions produced by the state's industrial sector. Since then, the state of California is continuously ranked by the American Lung Association as one of the most polluted states, much of which can be connected to the oil industry (*American Heart Association* 2021). These emissions come from the various refineries throughout the state, as each has the capability of producing over two million barrels per day of crude oil (May 2009). This demonstrates the ways in which the oil industry continues to contribute to California environmentally, but this industry also plays a role in various sectors of the life of California community members as well.

The oil industry's involvement in California is extremely impactful on a statewide level, but has a greater health or political impact on neighborhoods. The neighborhoods that are often most affected by the industry are those that are predominantly low-income, communities of color with dozens of oil sites present within miles, surrounding their everyday activities. Lack of environmental justice, specifically in relation to the oil industry, in communities of color is

prominent. Environmental justice, as defined by the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), is the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income, with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies" (2021). In the case of the oil industry, the injustice caused by related companies comes to these communities in the form of air pollution, which as discussed, is often created by the emissions of various refineries and gas wells. It has been reported that people of color in California are 20 percent more likely to be more impacted by this pollution than white Californians (Boyd-Barrett 2019).

This comes as no surprise, as many of the oil sites are in locations that are heavily visited by residents, ranging from on the grounds of schools, churches, clinics, and even homes. According to the *Los Angeles Times*, more than 350,000 Californians live within a 600 feet radius of an oil or gas well (Menezes and Olalde 2020). All oil drilling sites, no matter their location and proximity, emit numerous toxins into the atmosphere that are detrimental to the health of residents and create lasting negative impacts. Per the World Health Organization and their reports on air pollution, it is estimated that air pollution kills an estimated seven million people annually because of both outdoor and indoor pollutants that often go unaddressed. Many of the chemicals released into the air from the refineries in these communities are many of which are well known to have a severe impact on overall health and life expectancy (Remy, et. al 2019; Ramos et. al 2017; Shamasunder et. al 2018; Tempus 2020).

The health impacts that come from living in close proximity to numerous refineries and drilling sites include and range from the development of asthma to heart disease and various forms of cancer (Andrade et. al 2017; Kay and Katz 2012). To further support this idea, the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health released a study (2018) which overviews the

health demographics of residents throughout the county, including Wilmington. One area of the study is the number of children in the community who have asthma. The percentage of children is seven percent and it is at the same number average for the county. In addition, the report supports the impact of pollution when stating that:

> This is an important issue in Los Angeles County, which is home to some of the most polluted communities in the state. Residents living in or near neighborhoods with high levels of pollution are at an increased risk for developing respiratory diseases, such as asthma, and cardiovascular diseases, such as stroke. (17)

The mentioned health impacts that are caused by the abundance of refinery pollution in low-income communities of color throughout California are of great concern, but do not seem to be gaining beneficial responses from city and state leaders.

Despite the severe impact on community residents at fault of the oil industry, the state and local governments continue to fund the practices of the oil industry. In the realm of political influence, over $122 million have gone into the political system of California on behalf of this industry (Mishak 2017). For example, most recent former California governors, Jerry Brown, Arnold Schwarzenegger, and Gray Davis have the three highest ranking funding amounts from oil companies since 2001 (Stock et. al 2018). This funding has been utilized to influence state legislation and policies to ensure that business conducted by the oil industry continues to be business-as-usual and is not modified or jeopardized. These acts of financial donation in return for laxed oil industry regulations have been successful in many cases and communities in various regions of California. This was witnessed during Jerry Brown's second term as governor, as there were over 23,892 new drilling permits granted to the oil and gas industry in California from 2011 to 2018 (Stock et. al 2018). Many would connect this advancement in the industry to their

mass donations in the realm of politics. In the cases where government officials or organizational leaders would not let money manipulate them, they were oftentimes removed from their position and replaced by a new official who fully demonstrated that they are pro-oil and willing to satisfy the demands of the oil industry (Mishak 2017). For this reason, community members have come to believe that the money of oil companies cannot compare to their requests for clean air, as their representatives have already demonstrated to them that has been and will continuously be the case.

Because community members believe they cannot combat the oil industry, the practices underway in their neighborhoods have become the norm for residents leaving them feeling unempowered and assuming that change cannot be made (Cart 2017). A factor that adds to residents' perceived inability to call for change is the few positive benefits that they receive from the industry. Although the oil industry negatively impacts many communities throughout the state, residents do still find themselves benefitting from the economic impacts of the industry in various ways as well. A few ways in which this is the case is residents benefitting from the supply of jobs and donations for community resources that oil companies in close proximity to them provide. For instance, in the California city of Richmond, Chevron is the largest employer, creating a complicated relationship between residents and the company. The oil and gas company is responsible for the income of over 3,000 residents, which can create a dilemma when attempting to create change for both community members and organizations ("City of Richmond", 2020). This is the case for many other cities and communities throughout, which creates hesitation for change. When encouraged by different community activists to stand up and push for change, many are cautious because they are at risk of losing the capability to put food on the table and continue to support their families financially.

Despite this information and the challenge it presents to community organizing, community organizations from around the state have still continued to build their platforms to push residents of various neighborhoods to consider the harsh impacts of neighborhood oil drilling. Members of these local organizations are working to make a clear statement to community members that residing in their neighborhood and living their day-to-day lives should not be indirectly jeopardizing their health. Through various forms of educating community members, organizations have led many to want to and, eventually, take action for themselves. For instance, Communities for a Better Environment has worked with Patagonia to develop a short-film bringing awareness to the pollution issue in Wilmington. This is a form of community awareness and through this new knowledge passed on, many residents have shifted to become more involved in movements towards environmental justice in their neighborhoods, even in the case of the oil industry.

For many community organizations, getting residents involved in the movement for change has shown to be effective in creating resilient communities who are willing to transform the traditional political system or manner in which one responds to oil industry air pollution. One impactful organization that has contributed to the empowerment and resiliency of neighborhood residents is Communities for a Better Environment (CBE), which is an non-profit striving to organize communities in need of environmental justice. To study the impact of Communities for a Better Environment in California neighborhoods, I turn to two primary sites with which they do direct work. The two primary locations of this organization that I examine are Richmond and Wilmington, California. Both communities are low-income communities of color who are heavily impacted by the oil industry in their neighborhoods. Not only are these two communities heavily impacted in the present-day, but they have been for decades. Richmond is a Bay Area

city that is a part of Contra Costa County and has always been dominated by Chevron on both financial and political levels. Chevron is responsible for dozens of flaring incidents and major accidents throughout the years, which have harmed the residents of the community of Richmond. Similarly, Wilmington is my small community that is a part of the City of Los Angeles' District 15, which is dominated by multiple oil companies. The oil companies in Wilmington are allowed to conduct business as usual by local officials, despite the refinery flaring incidents and accidents are a part of their history.

Despite the two communities located on opposite ends of California, Communities for a Better Environment has worked with both of these neighborhoods since its start in the state in 1978. Since this start, Communities for a Better Environment has continuously been involved in supporting the future of both these communities. Both locations have similar demographics, but since they are miles from each other, I was interested in examining if the location has any impact on the success of Communities for a Better Environment's organizing work. For this reason, I conduct a case study analysis on the work of CBE in both Richmond and Wilmington, California to identify the methods they have used to organize both communities and the successes, from the perspective of community members, in which they have achieved.

Drawing on this analysis of Communities for a Better Environment in both Wilmington and Richmond, California, I ask: How do local organizations working against the oil industry organize community members to participate in political action? I argue that through providing residents with tools and resources, Communities for a Better Environment has spearheaded an opportunity for political efficacy in the communities of Richmond and Wilmington, California. Through organizing the residents of both neighborhoods, CBE has provided community members with the means to articulate their own stories and gain access to the political process.

Through addressing the silencing and need for flexibility of the community, CBE is able to create new possibilities for its members to get involved in new and existing political spaces that challenge the oil industry. These practices are important because they lead to what I call *Transformative Community Resilience*, a type of resiliency that stems from shifting the narrative from one organizational view to form a multi-issued, coalition-based approach.

In order to demonstrate the way I answer this research question presented in this Capstone Project, this thesis project is broken into various sections that overview the process in answering this question. First, I engage with various pieces of scholarly work, all of which fall into three major bodies of literature. These bodies of literature explore the environmental justice movement in California, community organizing against the oil industry and similar industries, and ways in which we categorize resilient cities and communities. In the following section, I detail the methods that I have conducted and the reasoning that brought me to make this decision. In the third section of my project, I provide a historical context about the oil industry in Richmond and Wilmington, along with how Communities for a Better Environment came to exist in both locations. The fourth section of this capstone is my data analysis section where I draw upon multiple scholarly ideas, "people power" and a People's Organization as explanations surrounding the way in which Communities for a Better Environment has come to demonstrate Transformative Community Resiliency. The final section is my conclusion, which details the significance of this research and how I intend it to be utilized after it is complete. Additionally, I provide recommendations, based on my collected data, to be used by other community organizations throughout the nation.

Literature Review

In order to best understand the existing conversations that surround this topic, I examine three main bodies of literature that highlight the arguments of scholars that are instrumental to understanding the ways in which environmental justice based community organizing challenges while challenging the traditional power of the oil industry creates a sense of political efficacy. My research question calls attention to these three bodies for the reason that there is a need to understand the origins of community organizing in regard to environmental justice issues and aims to gauge success based on existing and continuing community resiliency. To begin the first subsection, I introduce the ways in which environmental justice has developed in the state of California. To support this, I highlight the more traditional view and the new view of the environmental justice movement, along with the mutual characteristics of both defined by scholars. In the following subsection, I describe the methods of community organizing against the oil industry that have developed throughout time, in many cases as a result of the level of pollution within neighborhoods. In the third subsection, I explore the discussions surrounding the ways in which scholars define resilient cities and communities, emphasizing the complexities that come with doing so. From reviewing the three listed bodies of literature, in the final subsection, I conclude that there is an existing gap between the three. There is a lack of study in regard to environmental justice community organizing and its relationship to resilience of the community itself because of the power of the oil industry.

Understanding Environmental Justice in California

Environmental Justice within the state of California has evolved over time and has more recently been categorized under two specific forms: traditional environmental activism and new environmental justice (Carter 2014; Sharmasunder 2018; Cushing et. al 2015). Prior to

understanding what new environmental justice in California looks like, it is critical to recognize

the ideas of traditional environmental activism, as this is where it evolved from and what it was

created as a response to. Traditional environmental activism, also known as environmentalism, is

the original viewpoint on why individuals should care about the environment. Environmentalism

is defined by Kaswan (2003) as the "improving environment by advocating for reductions in

pollution and encouraging the preservation of pristine areas" (456). Environmentalism was the

origin of environmental justice, but it was oftentimes spearheaded by national organizations and

their activists. Additionally, these organizations promoting the traditional form of environmental

activist "were founded with the goals of wilderness protection and the conservation of natural

resources" (Sharmasunder 2018, 218). This original movement did bring to the forefront issues

of climate change, along with water and land conservation.

Environmental justice was a response based on the need to change the traditional

landscape of focusing on a single, ideal community and the natural environment. Environmental

justice, as defined by Susan L. Cutter (1995), "is a more politically charged term, one that

connotes some remedial action to correct an injustice imposed on a specific group of people,

mostly people of colour in the USA" (111). This is a significant component to this new category

of environmental activism and this is where the idea of race and policy comes into play.

Anderson (2018) and Morello-Frosch (2002) both claim that disadvantaged communities are

those communities that environmental justice was created to support, as they are most

disproportionately impacted by environmental injustices and environmental activism failed to

recognize them. The main push for the environmental justice movement, as identified by Minkler

et. al (2008) was by the local community activist, who used this new frame of environmental

justice to establish environmental justice based community organizations. Organizations were

part of the traditional environmentalism movement, but these organizations were often spearheaded by white outsiders, individuals who were not community members, rather they were white, educated folks who came from other communities (Shamasunder 2018). This is a problem for the reason that there were many assumptions about the need of the community brought to the forefront, as opposed to the actual needs of residents.

The environmental justice movement is a movement that strives to be community-focused, which is a differentiating characteristic from traditional environmentalism that scholars emphasize (Carter 2014; Sharmasunder 2018; Cushing et. al 2015; Morello-Frosch 2002). These local activists aimed for the movement towards environmental justice to be showcased by those directly impacted. Cushing et. al (2015) articulates that this new idea of environmental justice now involves the communities in ways of which are beyond just gathering their stories and experiences. Scholars are adamant about how vital community participation is in this new era of environmental movements, particularly when looking to achieve justice (Minkler et. al 2008; Morello-Frosch 2002).

Many issues of environmentalism, although important and still significant in modern environmental justice, are now more inclusive of previously left out factors. Considering that there are still characteristics of the traditional environmental activism era, such as climate change mitigation in the modern era of environmental justice, both the traditional and new view on environmental activism are seen as the same to many. Taking this into account, scholars have argued against the two movements as being the same for three main reasons. The first reason is presented by Eric D. Carter (2014), as he details that traditional environmental activism methods focus on how to reduce risk of environmental hazards whereas new environmental justice shifts from reactive to proactive. Traditional environmental activism is reactive because it focuses on

how to reverse or fix any damages that have plagued nature and the physical environment overall, while environmental justice is proactive, adding the component of mitigating any future damage before it happens. Methods of new environmental justice aim to put in place proactive measures to prevent any future hazards from occuring in the first place (Carter 2014).

The second main characteristic that differentiates the traditional and new, is the way in which its created policies included and excluded specific groups of industry. Shamasunder (2018) adds to the claims of Carter by expanding on how exclusive traditional environmental justice practices were. Shamasunder speaks to the fact that old environmental justice based laws, such as the Clean Air Act enacted in 2004 and California Environmental Quality Act enacted in 1970, have left out specific industries including the oil industry throughout the state (217). Traditional environmental activism did not strive to ensure all environmental sectors were to be regulated, considering these methods as more conserative practices, meaning they are less modern then in the present system of environmental activism (210). To exclude many oil drilling locations from having to adhere to all state environmental regulatory laws, for the reason that they are grandfathered with exemption from environmental review, traditional environmental justice in California was not as holistic as the modern environmental justice ideology (217).

The final main characteristic is that traditional forms of environmental activism left out a large group of the population, low-income communities of color, who were often the most impacted by injustice that were allowed to happen because of the failure of environmental protections. Scholars adding to the conversation of this body of literature often deem inclusion of the consideration of low-income communities of color in environmental activism as the most differentiating and as the ultimate reason why activists pushed towards this new form of environmental justice. For example, Dorceta E. Taylor (1997) claims that "the inability of white

middle class environmental supporters of the reform environmental agenda to recognize the limit

of that agenda has led…[those] excluded from the reform environmental discourse to develop

alternative agendas" (16). Many other scholars (Kaswan 2003; Carter 2014; Shamasunder 2018)

have connected this limited agenda and lack of recognition for others to be a key component of

traditional environmental activism. Kaswan defines environmental justice and its movement by

stating, "This new 'environmental justice' movement did not simply raise the same issues [of

environmentalism] with a different voice. Instead, entirely new dimensions were brought to the

movement - the distribution of environmental harms and the fairness with which people are

treated" (2003, 457). Taylor (1997) emphasizes this claim and expresses that this limited agenda

and lack of recognition for working class folks, and people of color, led to the birth of

environmental justice. Following this, Morello-Frosch et. al (2002) explains that as a response to

the lack of the raditional lens of activism, environmental justice goes beyond through

emphasizing the issues of the people in relation to the environment, along with incorporating a

lens which recognizes the various levels of public health, social inequality, and discrimination

that is heightened through environmental injustices in neighborhoods. This shows itself to be

important because it is moving beyond traditional environmentalism to emphasize the value the

most impacted communities have and for this reason why they should be considered more often

when discussing environmental matters, such as oil industry pollution. Through this body of

literature, one comes to understand the progression from traditional environmentalism to

environmental justice, how community members have come to be considered when discussing

impacts of the surrounding environment, and ultimately, the way environmental justice provided

residents with a framework for activism as a response to environmental impacts.

Community Organizing Against the Oil Industry

Considering the method in which environmental justice provided communities with a framework to participate in activism, community organizing has served as the backbone of environmental justice movements in all sectors of California environmental issues. More recently, there is a move throughout the state to organize against the oil industry's environmental impacts in communities of color (Minkler et. al 2008). Historically, many have viewed local community organizing to be an action with little potential success in the realm of politics and social justice (Dreier 2009). This narrative has shifted considering the newfound recognition of environmental issues, such as the domination of the oil industry, in low-income, underserved communities leading organizations the opportunity to push for community members to become self-motivated to create change in their neighborhoods, which have in many cases been successful. Organizing against the oil industry and other environmentally toxic industries is not specific to California, rather it is a nationwide fight recognized in varying cities that are highlighted by scholars in detail (Barry 2003; Lerner 2006; Early 2017; Krings and Copic 2021). In this body of literature, scholars explore the elements of community organizing in relation to the oil industry, highlighting the lack thereof community involvement shifting to being reliant on community members to assist in challenging and changing policies, along with traditional power relationships.

The first major observation in this body of literature is that community activism against the oil industry often lacked resident involvement, but it is not the fault of community members. Rather the lack of resident involvement is connected to community members not knowing there were local organizations attempting to gather against the oil industry's toxicity. Scholars such as Cohen et. al (2012) and Nolan et. al (2021), emphasizes this lack of participation as a factor in many communities, especially for low-income, communities of color. Because of this being the

case, Barry (2003) details the shift in the methods utilized for community organizing, in the case

against Shell Oil in Louisiana. Community organizers in this specific case study realized that not

having resident involvement hindered the results when local organizations were pushing for

change. Although some residents did form and push forward local organizations, Lerner (2006)

strengthens the idea of a shift in methods presented by Barry (2003) and highlights the fact that

many residents settled for small instant payments from Shell, deterring them from pursuing any

further community action against the company. Additionally, many residents were frightened

about becoming involved with any local organizations that were assisted by larger environmental

organizations because of potential manipulation (Lerner 2006, 157). This case demonstrated to

scholars the need to use different methods for organizing the general public of these impacted

locations.

On top of the need for resident involvement in attempting to organize against the oil

industry, the methods on how to do so had to be updated. For this reason, the second observation

presented in this body of literature is the development of new methods for community organizing

in relation to toxic industries in communities. New methods of community organizing have

stemmed from a history of trial and error, but ultimately now are derived from the Association of

Community Organizations for Reform Now (ACORN) and their model for organizing (Squires

and Chadwick 2009). ACORN's model of organizing has prioritized utilizing methods such as

"direct action, negotiation, legislation, and voter participation, and utilizes neighborhoods as the

training ground…[finding] its success in mass organization of low– and moderate–income

people" (Squires and Chadwick 2009, 97). With this in mind, Petersen et. al (2006) highlights

that in many situations of organizing against the oil industry, specifically in Southern California,

community activists have become concerned with actively working to change the existing

narrative of lack of resident involvement. The methods utilized to do this, which support the

claims of Squires and Chadwick (2009), included outreach to residents in spaces that they

already frequently went to, such as churches and community resource centers, along with

encouraging existing members to tell their neighbors about their participation. Through doing

this, Lerner (2006) emphasizes that this method has allowed for community organizers to

immerse themselves in the existing places and not be presented as outsiders. The new way of

gathering residents to be a part of the movement against the oil industry led to the creation of

"people power," which continues to be utilized in the fight against the oil industry throughout the

United States.

 After understanding the methods to gain community participation, the literature also

explains the significance of the way in which these community members have become involved

in the fight against the oil industry. With this in mind, the third observation of this body of

literature is the involvement of people as fundamental to the success of organizing in relation to

the oil industry. The idea of "people power" is recognized by scholars (Peterson 2006; Staples

2019) as a guiding method for community organization in relation to the oil industry. When

defining "people power," Staples (2016) states that:

> When people join together and organize, they increase their ability to get things
> done…Grassroots community organizing offers a means for power to be
> exercised through the strength of numbers, and also contributes toward the end of
> the building social solidarity…[Additionally], the operative assumption is that
> effective leadership should and will emerge from within the community. (2-3)

The "people power" characteristic of organizing is achieved through developing community

coalitions with both residents who have personally been impacted by the industry, along with

allies who empathetically support the cause (Petersen et. al 2006, 348). This participation allows

for and pushes allies to advocate for the residents of the community while the residents are also

being self-advocates (Staples 2019, 2), increasing the number of voices participating in the push

against destructive industries, like the oil industry. Scholars argue that it is critical when community organizing "to ensure control and participation of local members," (Squires and Chadwick 2009, 98) and keep this at the forefront, allowing for "people power" methods of organizing to be successful in creating change in the realm of policy and community environment. The push to organize residents has led to "people power" becoming the most important characteristic of community organizing in the fight against big oil. Through the creation of "people power," the narrative surrounding the movement against the oil industry has shifted to completely involve residents in many different aspects of the work that goes into the movement against oil and other toxic industries.

Community organizing against the oil industry utilizing "people power" has developed to involve more than allowing organizers to merely understand who the stakeholders are and vouch for them, rather the organizers are now involving them in the process of change. The methods of one-on-one and workshop preparation are a key component to "people power" organizing, which are utilized to prepare the residents to introduce themselves as stakeholders and take a seat at the table with oil industry leaders (Berry 2003; Lerner 2006). Balzas and Morello-Frosch discuss the methods in which residents in California are now being organized and trained to collect data that helps in the push for policy change that surrounds the oil industry's involvement in their communities (2013). Organizations throughout California's efforts additionally understand the importance of youth and the impact of their involvement in the "people power" method. For this reason, activists are continuously supporting them in understanding the harm the oil industry is causing in their communities. These organizations provide youth interested with workshops that teach them the skills to combat this and strive to push for policy change (Nolan et. al 2021). With developing the skills of impacted community members and allies, this component of achieving

"people power" not only allows for action on one issue to be successful, but also creates an "organizational structure through which community members can act consistently to challenge and change power disparities" (Staples 2019, 4). This ensures a foundation for long term ability to address community issues and disparities. Through this literature, one understands the push for creating community members that will promote change for themselves, whether or not they have organizations behind them. This understanding of the second body of literature leads to analysis of how community organizing can lead to a resilient city and community in relation to the oil industry involvement.

Defining Resilient Cities and Communities

Resilience is a term which has traditionally taken the meaning of having the ability to recover after a difficult situation no matter the context it is discussed in. According to Raven Cretney (2014), resilience "speaks to a desire to successfully respond and adapt to disruptions outside of the status quo," which is the basis of all definitions of resilience. Although this traditional definition continues to be the root, there is no longer one simple definition for resilience, especially when it is in relation to cities and communities. Raven Cretney (2014) emphasizes resilience to be a complex term to define and is not necessarily always applicable to all frames. All of these frames are different, but overlap in various sections of definition. Like many other concepts, the understanding of resilience has developed over time and despite differences in specific definitions, resilience viewpoints can be categorized as more traditional, following the status quo and neoliberal norms, or as more-contemporary, being crafted by activists (Cretney 2014; Meerow and Newell 2019). While it is established that both understandings of resilience are still utilized in the present day, many scholars believe that the modern definition of resilience is more holistic and considers factors that were not considered

before (Cretney 2014; Meerow and Newell 2019; Newman 2017). In this body of literature, many scholars create and expand on definitions of resilience, along with the elements traditional definitions of resilience are lacking.

The first idea established about how to define resilience in this body of literature is resilience within a socio-ecological model and context. Cretney (2014) establishes that the idea of resilience in cities and communities within a socio-ecological understanding is based on two major elements: adaptive capacity and transformation (630). Traditionally, this idea of socio-ecological model has come to be defined by scholars as an "understanding of the multifaceted and interactive effects of personal and environmental factors… [and] elements that influence and contribute to prevalence, prevention tactics, and evaluation of programming and policy" (Kilanowski 2017, 295). Kilanowski's discussion focuses the socio-ecological model specifically in agricultural communities, but the definition utilized reflects the way scholars have applied it in different settings. Cretney decides to utilize a similar definition of the socio-ecological model to assist in defining socio-ecological resilience. The socio-ecological, activist crafted definition of resilience, Cretney claims, is one of which addresses environmental issues, but connects to local and global societal issues as well. To further this view, Sara Meerow and Joshua P. Newell (2019) highlight that this modern definition of resilience is comprehensive with a full understanding of politics, power, and equity, which has not historically been the case in other contexts (310).

Agreeing with this context of resilience when in relation to cities and communities, the scholars also pull into consideration the term urban resilience as a possible context (315). Sara Meerow (2016) provides a definition for this idea stating that:

> Urban resilience refers to the ability of an urban system—and all its constituent socio-ecological and socio-technical networks across temporal and spatial scales—to maintain

or rapidly return to desired functions in the face of a disturbance, to adapt to change, and to quickly transform systems that limit current or future adaptive capacity (39).

Meerow's definition states that urban resilience is a mode in which the society within an urban location is able to continue to exist, even after any societal or financial disaster. This definition presented is the second way that scholars have come to define resilience and use in order to continue providing clarity of what this term encompasses. Utilizing this definition expands on the existing narrative of community resilience and allows it to be achieved in differing ways, despite the context being the same or similar to one another (Meerow 2016, 39). Newman (2017) expands on this conversation surrounding resilient cities and writes about it in relation to the fossil fuel industry's involvement in communities throughout the nation. He discusses this as a key area in which it is necessary for cities and communities to become resilient in and getting rid of the industry entirely would be the way to do so (7).

The final idea established in this existing body of literature is that of which defines not only what resilience is, but how to achieve it. Newman (2017) advances the ideas of urban resilience through labeling principles which will push communities in the right direction with resilience, a characteristic that Meerow (2016) did not necessarily do in detail. The following principles that help achieve resilience, according to Newman (2017) are: invest in renewable energy, create sustainable mobility, foster inclusive/healthy communities, shape disaster recovery, build biophilic urbanism, and produce cyclical metabolism (Newman 2017, 10). These principles are vital components to resilience and are supported by additional scholars who claim that the environmental quality of life, including that of the residents in these communities, are a guiding indicator of resilience (Srinivasan 2003; Ilevbare and Idemudia 2018). Ilevbare and Idemudia (2018) also emphasize the importance of the community members and their personal self-perception of whether or not their city and community is resilient. This is a concept that is in

need of further research to increase the significance it holds, but is a key point in the study I plan to conduct.

Advancing the Literature

The scholarly conversations surrounding environmental justice in California, community organizing against the oil industry, and defining resilient cities and communities are complex and multi-layered, but lack a connection that is critical to understanding the impact of community organizing in creating resiliency among community members, specifically in low-income communities of color. Environmental justice, although defined within this new era, still embodies many historical stances that traditional environmental activism does. Scholars are still seeking to agree on which components and to what extent it should be included in the new understanding of environmental justice and resilience. Community organizing in relation to the oil industry has developed greatly over the past few years and has become more aware of the needs of community members to become involved and the methods in which they do so. When defining resilient cities, it is important to understand the context used and is being furthered as scholars continue to incorporate new perspectives. In many cases, scholars have not recognized the role in which community members and their experiences play in environmental justice, organizing, and defining resilience. The conversation has been started by Ilevbare and Idemudia (2018), as they discuss the way in which communities define for themselves the impact that organizing against environmental injustices has on their resiliency. I look to further expand on this connection. Although there is an examined connection between how community organizing can be successful when residents are involved, there needs to be closer study on whether or not the residents view community organizations to impact their gauge of self-resilience and how they have come to define that resiliency. There is no source that speaks to the way in which residents

are deeming community organizing as advancing their resiliency or which methods have been

helpful in achieving this resiliency. Additionally, there are very limited sources of literature that

discuss the opportunities beyond community that coalitions bring to the resiliency of community

members who are involved in community organizing. This gap in the existing literature serves as

a guiding point in this capstone project, and will be explored further in the data analysis section.

Methods

In order to best address the gap in the existing research, I have conducted a case study

analysis on two California communities, Richmond and Wilmington. These two communities

have extremely similar demographics, along with heavy involvement of the oil industry in their

area. Most importantly, both of these communities are actively served by Communities for a

Better Environment (CBE) and have been since the start of the organization in California. It was

critical to hear from members connected to CBE that are on the frontlines of organizing work

against the oil industry. To collect data on how community organizing against the oil industry

impacts the political efficacy of residents, I utilized the method of semi-structured interviews.

My research question invites this method in order to collect the full scope of both

narratives through a one-on-one conversation. The method that I used was semi-structured

interviews, a method that aims to collect direct narratives and experiences utilizing open-ended

questions that are tailored to be more specific to the research topic at hand (Galleta and Cross

2013, 24). Considering that an interviewer is meeting face-to-face with the interviewee during

semi-structured interviews, it leaves room for clarification on responses to a particular answer

given, a characteristic that many other methods do not allow for (24). Using semi-structured

interviews was a good choice in method for my question because it allowed me to let participants

lead the conversation and follow up with any questions that were necessary. Additionally, my

research question is looking for the experience of the community members, and does not ask for a simple one word answer to get that experience.

Prior to detailing the data collection process and to demonstrate that this project was carried out ethically, it is important to express my own subjectivity and positionality as influential factors in my research. I am a native Angeleno, and Wilmington, California is one of two communities in Los Angeles that I call home. Everyday from my birth up until I went off to college, my family and I would commute the short distance back and forth from San Pedro to Wilmington on the California 110 freeway. The 110 freeway provides any individual who is driving through with a clear view of the refineries throughout the neighborhood of Wilmington. I was a witness to the releasing of toxins into the air from a young age and even though I may have not always understood its role or damage, I always questioned it. Although this is the case, it was not until my first year of my undergraduate studies that I realized how severe this issue was and gained true interest in it.

As a Latina, whose family still primarily resides in Wilmington and who has witnessed the impacts that the oil industry has contributed to long-term health conditions of residents, I am conducting this study from the viewpoint of an impacted community member. I also have witnessed the ebb and flow of community organizing surrounding this impact. Though this is the case, it is important for me to note that I am not the voice of all community members in this neighborhood. As someone who has not held permanent residence in the neighborhood, in many cases, I may not have the same experience as those who spend all hours of their day in Wilmington. Further, I have no ties to the city of Richmond, the second location of my case study, other than the fact that I can empathize with their fight to rid the oil industry from their neighborhoods. Though I can emphasize, the communities of Richmond and Wilmington,

although similar, are distinct as well. For this reason, I strive to avoid assumptions of the city of Richmond to allow this research to reflect the voice of residents to be at the forefront. To do this, in both communities, I plan to allow participants to direct the conversation and leave room for diverse perspectives, not pushing for a view that is parallel to mine or the residents' views in Wilmington.

When conducting the semi-structured interviews, I aimed to understand and connect the impact of CBE in creating political efficacy in residents while challenging or disrupting the traditional power relationships between the oil industry and the communities of Richmond and Wilmington. This discussion eventually led participants to answer how they, as members and leadership of CBE, have witnessed their community become resilient. Through utilizing semi-structured interviews, I had the opportunity to connect with residents who are community activists, community organization leaders, and CBE coalition members to hear their experiences that are relevant to this research.

The data I collected through conducting these semi-structured interviews are narratives and experiences from participants that were in one of the three groups: current and former members who have participated in CBE, the organizers and leadership of CBE, and CBE coalition organization members. For the category of former and current members of CBE, the criterion of their selection was that they have lived in the two case study locations at some point in their life for longer than one-year. This criterion was necessary to establish because the membership of CBE is a variety of individuals who often reside in different communities within Los Angeles and the Bay Area, but not necessarily in the two set locations of this study. When interviewing this specific sub-category of participants, it was critical to me that the voices that I listened to throughout this semi-structured interview process were those who have witnessed the

oil industry's practices in the neighborhood they reside in or work in first-hand, on a daily basis. All participants who agreed to be interviewed were required to be at least 18 years of age. Additionally, these participants were required to sign a consent form prior to the start of the interview. This consent form clearly stated the rights that they possessed as a participant, their right to be anonymous, and the contact information of who to contact with any questions or concerns.

These selection criteria allowed me to find leaders and members of CBE who represented the specific two case study locations of Richmond and Wilmington. To identify participants who fit the selection criteria, I first started outreach to the leadership of CBE in both areas through contact information that was accessible to the public. For the coalition colleagues of CBE, I did the same. From here, I was able to gain recommendations on which current and former members of the organization also fit this criteria and would be open to speaking to me. Additionally, I utilized LinkedIn messaging to outreach to members that were involved in the organization as well. Through this method of gathering interview participants, I was able to gain various perspectives on both the movement behind challenging existing power, along with the view of a resilient community. I interviewed nine participants between the months of February and March of 2022. Of these participants, three of these were individuals with ties to CBE in Richmond and six of these were individuals with ties to CBE in Wilmington. This period of data collection was a time where progress in relation to the issue of pollution from the oil industry in both communities had in some cases been achieved. This was also a time where the organization had just begun to go back to in-person actions. Despite residents and organizers still in the beginning stages of recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic, community organizing in many cases was still very active at this time as well.

Due to the fact that we are still in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, all interviews conducted took place on Zoom. Interviews that were conducted on Zoom were transcribed utilizing the Otter.ai transcription service. These interview sessions were individually thirty minutes to one hour long and consisted of seven primary questions that were followed up by sub-questions depending on the responses. These questions, following the nature of semi-structured interviews, served as a guide for the conversation and allowed for the participants to lead as they felt comfortable. These interview questions, which can be found on Appendix A, all focused on attaining information pertaining to three different areas: 1) Insight on the oil industry and community relationship, 2) Methods of community organizing that are utilized, 3) The shift in relationship and resiliency of the community. These areas of interest welcomed information that was needed to answer my research question.

Prior to conducting these interviews, there were numerous benefits and obstacles to keep in consideration when collecting data through this specific method. Through utilizing a case study analysis, I had the opportunity to see how, if in any ways, there is a difference in the way CBE interacts with community members in Richmond versus Wilmington and conclude which of these methods are more utilized. Because I decided to utilize semi-structured interviews, I was not necessarily able to ensure I allowed the opinions from folks, as I may have been able to gain from anonymous surveying.

Although interviews were held on Zoom, I was able to interact with the residents and gather information from them while they were in a neutral location that provides space to be honest about their opinion on CBE or any progress on the shift in oil industry power. An obstacle that I encountered while seeking to conduct interviews, especially with the organizers and leadership of CBE, was that community organizing work is, in many cases, extremely time

consuming, which means it was difficult to find participants that had available time in their schedules. On top of the general demand that community organizing has on scheduling, the COVID-19 pandemic made it more difficult to find organizers or leadership of CBE who were not already overloaded with other commitments. Despite this, many of the interviewees were more than happy to meet with me when they found the time to do so.

Initially, I hoped I would have the opportunity to collect data through ethnography, or participant observation, in addition to just semi-structured interviews. Though this was not possible because when looking for different CBE events to attend, they were extremely limited and harder to locate than they were prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. With the fact that many of the CBE meetings took place on Zoom, it made it more difficult to conduct ethnography than it typically may have been in the past. This observation may have also been more difficult to conduct because many participants were not in the space to have their cameras on, and it was difficult to interact with people as well. Because of these challenges, I ultimately was unable to collect information through the method of ethnography. Though this is the case I do believe that this would be a great method to utilize if further research on the subject is conducted by other scholars in a similar field.

History

To contextualize the data that was collected through semi-structured interviews, this section will provide background information on the long history of the oil industry in Richmond and Wilmington, California and how it led to the community organizing of Communities for a Better Environment (CBE) in both locations. CBE, formerly established as Citizens for a Better Environment, was created in Chicago, Illinois in the 1970. The organization was started as a non-profit, activist organization influenced by the nationwide environmental movement and policies

(Communities for a Better Environment, "History"). Because of the boom of the environmental movement in California and the decline of the same movement in Illinois, the organization expanded out west, starting with a San Francisco headquarters in 1978 and a Los Angeles headquarters following closely behind in 1982.

Despite the oil industry initially taking off on the East Coast of the country, it has now expanded across the nation. With this expansion, California has become a leading state when it comes to oil industry site development, production, and consumption. In the late 1885s, pioneers explored the potential for oil production in California, but many within the state were against this proposal until it was realized that it could be utilized as a more economically mindful source of fuel (Johnson 1970, 157). It was in the early 1900s that Standard Oil created its California company, leading to a major development of refineries across the coast of the state from the San Francisco Region to the Los Angeles Area (158).

As a part of this development, Richmond's Standard Oil Company, which now is known as Chevron, was established in 1901. This refinery site was established before the city of Richmond officially became recognized as a city (Parenteau 2015). This new booming industry in Richmond led to major growth in both population and economy. As jobs became more readily available, more people of color relocated from various different areas to be closer to the work opportunities (Cervanto-Soto, n.d.). Aside from the close proximity to jobs, this relocation can be credited to redlining in Richmond, housing policies which led many people of color to only be able to reside in specific areas of the city, such as more affordable, less-maintained industrial parts of the city. Due to the success of Richmond as one of the largest refineries in the nation (Chevron Richmond, "History"), local government officials continuously worked collaboratively with the oil industry leaders. The City of Los Angeles, similarly to Richmond, was a part of the

initial establishment of the coastal refinery industry development conducted by Standard Oil. However, the start of the oil industry specifically in Wilmington was not until 1932, when its abundance of onshore oil was found (Ottot Jr. and Clarke 2007, 1). Although discovered by General Petroleum Corporation, many other oil companies established themselves in the area. Because of the takeover of Los Angeles and Richmond, CBE became involved in the fight for change in both areas.

The interaction between CBE and the community members of Richmond surrounds the issues of safety and pollution in the area caused by the Chevron Refinery (Communities for a Better Environment, "Richmond"). Incidents in the community caused by Chevron are not a recent occurrence, rather it is a norm in the community (Sadasivam 2021). These oil accidents have been reported in the area of Richmond since 1989 and have most recently happened in 2021 (Niekerken 2019; Bay Area News Group 2012). CBE has actively worked to bring awareness to refinery incidents that have occurred in Richmond, but especially the 2012 Chevron Refinery Fire. This explosion was the commencement of CBE's active battle against Chevron in the city of Richmond, as residents were frustrated with the company after their previous incidents (Funes 2016; Cagle 2013). This battle sparked organizing the community residents in the area, along with actively attempting to change policy and hold the company legally accountable for the detrimental explosion.

Initially after the 2012 Chevron explosion, CBE was an active participant in meetings with the local government which was intended to hold the company accountable for their actions. Though this was the case, in 2014, despite the accident that had recently happened created significant damages to their residents' livelihoods, the city council granted Chevron the ability to expand their operations (Brekke and Emslie 2014). Because of this, CBE sued the City of

Richmond for their lack of prevention of future incidents by enabling Chevron to continue

business in the community (Goldberg 2018). This was not the only lawsuit that CBE

spearheaded, as they also sued Chevron Corporation and the Bay Area Air Quality Agency for

their role in the matter (CBS Bay Area 2014; Goldberg 2018). This signifies the fight throughout

time that CBE has continued to pursue for the community in Richmond.

Communities for a Better Environment has actively brought awareness to these oil

industry incidents and pushed lawsuits against various refinery corporations to hold them

accountable for the harm they are causing in communities (Siegel and Hernandez 2021). In

Wilmington, there have been numerous oil refinery accidents in the past and many of which still

often occur today. In the community, there are five major refineries that are the culprits

responsible for the fires, explosions, and flare ups that the residents of Wilmington endure (May

et. al 2009), as it is also the norm in this location. Lawsuits pursued by CBE have been

successful in getting these impacted residents in Los Angeles funds back into their community.

Additionally, CBE and its members have ensured that the created Southern California's South

Coast Air Quality Management District continuously on top of the negative pollutants coming

from the refineries throughout the community (Espino-Padron and Martinez 2021). Though

significant, there is a campaign in which CBE has consistently worked on since their start in

Wilmington.

One major movement CBE has started a campaign surrounding one major community

issue: neighborhood oil drilling. Since 1932, oil drilling in the neighborhoods of Wilmington has

continued to be an active practice. According to the Natural Resource Defense Council (NRDC),

in 2006, city planners in Los Angeles granted a single oil company the able to drill 540 wells and

produce up to 5,000 barrels of oil each day, which highlights the lack of care for how big this

issue continued to grow even after decades (Mall and Bergen 2021). In the current community of Wilmington, there are over 3,400 onshore oil well sites in the community, with at least one-third of them being regularly utilized in oil industry operations (Herr and Aldern 2021). CBE has actively participated in the movement to stop this oil drilling activity from occurring on various levels which include, pushing for the banning of oil sites being in close proximity to residents' homes and striving to allow oil drilling in Wilmington in general.

This movement pushed in the community of Wilmington by Communities for a Better Environment in a coalition of other environmentally motivated organizations called STAND-LA, has just recently achieved success. In February 2020, in collaboration with Patagonia, CBE released a short documentary film that shed light on the mass pollution and health problems the oil industry has caused for residents in Wilmington. This documentary emphasized the activist movement that CBE started and has continued over the years. Early in December 2021, Communities for a Better Environment advocated for the new Secretary of Interior, Deb Haaland, to come to the community of Wilmington and witness the situation of the oil industry firsthand (Chavez 2021). This was significant because it brought the community of Wilmington and the issues it faces to the forefront on a national level and promoted the need for the City of Los Angeles to do better in mitigating future damage and putting a stop to oil drilling in the community. After this visit, in January 2022, the Los Angeles City Council voted unanimously to phase out the oil drilling practices in the city, bringing a successful win for CBE (Hahm and Chavez 2022). Additionally, the City of Los Angeles, in this plan has designated funding to make this an enacted policy (Hahm and Chavez 2022). Currently, this is set to happen over the next twenty years, but CBE is pushing for the City of Los Angeles to study for justification to why this should occur on a faster timeline. As explained by the statement CBE put out, this took

many years to achieve. Though different in some ways, Communities for a Better Environment has continued to push for and excel in finding solutions to the problems caused by the oil industry in both Richmond and Wilmington, California throughout their history. Through understanding this, the data analysis with findings from my research conducted in the next section shows, in more detail, how this work has held significance in both the realms of community empowerment, local policy, and community resilience.

Data Analysis

In the previous section, I detailed the way in which the history of Communities for a Better Environment and the oil industry has looked like in Richmond and Wilmington, California. Through this history, one can see the way the oil industry has impacted the two communities in ways that have escalated, and pushed community members to action. For this reason, the goal of my data collection process was to understand the role in which community organizing plays in providing tools and resources to residents to disrupt the business-as-usual of the oil industry, through becoming more politically involved, in both Richmond and Wilmington, California. In addition, I wanted to understand the role that the organizing methods of local organizations, such as Communities for a Better Environment (CBE), play in the empowerment of the two communities in my case study. In order to do so, I ask the following research question to serve as a point of analysis: How do local organizations working against the oil industry organize community members to participate in political action?

In this section, I argue that through providing residents with tools and resources, Communities for a Better Environment has spearheaded an opportunity for political efficacy in the communities of Richmond and Wilmington, California. Through organizing the residents of both neighborhoods, CBE has provided community members with the means to articulate their

own stories and gain access to the political process. Through addressing the silencing and need

for flexibility of the community, CBE is able to create new possibilities for its members to get

involved in new and existing political spaces that challenge the oil industry. These practices are

important because they lead to what I call *transformative community resiliency*, which is a type

of resilience that refers to the ability of a community and its residents to shift its voice,

understanding, and practices from an individual organizational viewpoint to a multifaceted

coalition viewpoint when combating injustice caused by forces of power. This shift in the factors

mentioned above are key components in building a sense of agency that not only recognizes the

existing power dynamic causing community members to be resilient, but also understands the

capability one has to change it. This goes beyond the traditional definitions of resilience because

it focuses on the ability of individuals within a community to go beyond their own recovery

within society and transform political spaces, rather than the ability to continue fighting to their

own status quo. The following subsections of this data analysis section outline how the

transformation happens and *transformative community resiliency* is achieved.

Addressing the Silence and Need for Flexibility

   The silencing of members in communities of color is an action that comes as no surprise.

As discussed in the introduction of this capstone, one comes to see how those in power actively

silence those speaking out. This is the case for residents in Richmond and Wilmington, who are

both not asked for their input, and actively silenced by those in power. Throughout interviews

with various participants of CBE from both locations, it became clear that this was the case. One

participant expresses her view on silencing of residents when stating, "I think Wilmington is an

area where being siloed, and being silenced, it works for the oil industry, because it keeps us

divided. It keeps our vision unattainable" (Interviewee E). Because of this silencing mentioned

by Interviewee E, residents themselves have come to be unsure if their input has any meaning in the sphere of politics. When speaking to residents, Interviewee D mentions that many members joining the organization question the power they hold through asking, "I have no voice, I have no power, I am unable to [inaudible], what can my voice count [for]," and this assumption many hold that CBE is looking to change.

In communities of color that are impacted by social issues, such as pollution by the oil industry, language is a factor that can often actively cause and uphold the silence of individuals. This takes form through differences in native language that hinders communication, but also in the prevalence of jargon in information that is not always explained in a digestible way for the general public. A wide range of community members in Richmond and Wilmington, whether they be youth, adults, or elders, are all silenced by this barrier in some shape and form. Communities for a Better Environment is well-informed of this silence and for this reason, they have aimed to combat it in different ways. CBE reaches out to all of these groups through an "intergenerational organizing" (Interviewee H) approach that addresses the language disparity. One participant details how resident are often silenced because of the language barrier when stating:

> People get upset because they haven't been taken into consideration. They will never even receive a flyer or notice at the door, and if they did, you know, it wasn't in the language that they can understand. So, when they see that the particular proceeding left them out, you know, they get upset. (Interviewee D)

For this reason, CBE has combated this issue through holding meetings that are bilingual to explain to members about what is happening politically in their communities. In one discussion, Interviewee H highlights that, "our adult component is very monolingual, Spanish speaking monolinguals, which is needed, but also in our youth, their monolingual English mainly. And so again, in spaces it is bilingual, we practice bilingualism," to address the cause of this silence and

ensure that all members have access to the same information despite traditional language barriers.

To address the prevalence of jargon in the information that is traditionally provided to residents, CBE ensures the involvement of all branches of their organization. Communities for a Better Environment (CBE) has established their organization to follow a model referred to as a triad. This triad, mentioned by CBE organizational leaders and members that I interviewed, is characterized by three major branches of work: legal, research, and organizing (Interviewee A; Interviewee B; Interviewee E). This model has shown to be successful, and is described to go "hand in hand" with each other and as "something that we can't have the successes with one of these missing from the equation" (Interviewee A; Interviewee E). To disseminate information that may not be as comprehensible to general members, the organization works to pull each branch to educate members on areas they specialize in using common language and translations they can understand.

With the knowledge they gain from participating in CBE, members are allowed to deconstruct the components of each issue that allows for the oil industry to continue holding power. From the perspective of Alinsky, "a People's Organization calmly accepts the overwhelming fact that all problems are related and…that ultimate success in conquering these evils can be achieved only by victory over all evils" (1945, 83). To dismantle these issues that assist the oil industry in keeping their power, all branches of CBE are involved in educating the members of the organization. Through acknowledging issues that may create a greater challenge to disrupting the power of the oil industry in the two communities, CBE has the opportunity to continue advancing their own desired policies that challenge the existing power of oil through pushing their members to get involved politically through these coalitions.

Unlike the silencing that community members may face in other spaces, Communities for a Better Environment has made it a goal to reverse this silencing of residents and empower them to use their voices to combat the oil industry. Though this is a goal, prior to outreaching to residents, it is essential for the organization to consider the different factors preventing community members from wanting to speak out. For many residents in the communities of Richmond and Wilmington, when discussing the push back when attempting to organize against the oil industry, there was a consistent reason for silence amongst CBE members that participants emphasized. One of the perceived needs to stay silent stems from the concern and anxiety of residents about how a change in the oil industry and its power would impact other aspects of their lives, especially when it comes to income. Participants heavily discussed this challenge with statements such as, "pushback is always in connection to jobs and the economy" (Interviewee E) and "speaking out can cause termination of their employment…it ties to their livelihoods"(Interviewee C). This clash of whether to support organizing against oil or continue to bring income into one's home is an example of a major factor CBE must address when working towards bringing to the forefront the voice of community members.

With the intention of actively recognizing, affirming, and addressing the concerns of residents who fear the end of the oil industry will invoke more problems in relation to other socio-economic issues, Communities for a Better Environment (CBE) advocates for a plan referred to as Just Transition. According to the Climate Justice Alliance, an alliance that CBE is apart of, Just Transition gives a name and response to "labor unions and environmental justice groups, rooted in low-income communities of color, who saw the need to phase out the industries that were harming workers, community health and the planet; and at the same time provide just pathways for workers to transition to other jobs. It was rooted in workers defining a transition

away from polluting industries in alliance with fence line and frontline communities" ("Just Transition Principles" 2019). This Just Transition plan is conscious of the beneficial impact that the oil industry has on the lives of its employees and for that reason emphasizes how to best make sure they are not burdened with additional social issues. This allows for CBE to challenge the oil industry in the realm of policy for the reason that they critically analyze the impacts that shutting down the industry could present and provide comprehensive solutions that will mitigate this.

Once the silencing of residents in low-income communities of color is addressed and reversed, it is important to recognize the limits that may come when organizing these folks surrounding the oil industry. Throughout my interviews, participants expressed the idea of hesitations from residents surrounding commitment limits and bandwidth when participating in the community organizing spearheaded by CBE. The two communities of Richmond and Wilmington have residents that are predominantly working class, meaning that oftentimes "the people that we [CBE] are doing this work for are not always gonna be the ones that can join meetings" (Interviewee B). This is a harsh reality of community organizing, despite wanting to involve impacted residents who are not always at the frontlines of the activism. This participant continues on to discuss how it is difficult to organize residents in these communities because they are "we have to really meet folks where they are. It's where, you know, organizing low income communities of color, or trying to survive having kids, multiple jobs, [...] unhoused folks" (Interviewee B). Keeping these factors in mind, Communities for a Better Environment has made it a goal to be welcoming and flexible of any bit of time that residents who are limited in time can give to the organization.

For someone participating in activism put together through community organizing, it is oftentimes a major time commitment on the part of members, as it is relied upon to keep organizations running. Communities for a Better Environment has reshaped what participation and involvement in their organization looks like. This participation reshaping has been successful when working with the communities of Richmond and Wilmington, California considering that they are predominantly working class residents. When speaking to one interviewee, she mentioned:

> Yes, it's very difficult because of people's time. For example, you know, so sometimes there might be community hearings, people need to end the community hearings, are really our hours that people cannot participate in. Sometimes meetings, you know, official meetings start at eight, nine, or ten [in the morning…] people also have issues with transportation […] So we just have to figure out how to work with what we have. You know, like some people might be able to sign petitions, some people might be able to do something on the weekend. Some people might be able to attend a hearing […] and some people might be involved with the school […] they connect us to wherever they are connected to. And so, that we could rotate [support] and involve people at their time and at their level. (Interviewee D)

The reason that this is important is because it gives to members the agency to choose the level in which they can be involved. This provides understanding to how CBE has transformed their space and given flexibility to their members to participate in whichever capacity they can. With this flexibility, this helps members not only continue any existing involvements they have, but also learn more about new ones that can be transformative to their understanding of various social issues.

Creating New Possibilities

As part of their work of empowering residents, Communities for a Better Environment (CBE) has actively worked towards creating new opportunities for its members in both Richmond and Wilmington. The development opportunities crafted by CBE include narrative

building and leadership development. These two programming opportunities that CBE actively

utilizes have pushed members of the organization to become empowered to engage in the

political discussions combatting the power of the oil industry. When focusing on narrative

building, Interviewee E shares:

> You know, we have a lot of trainings on becoming spokespeople, you know,
> really developing your story of self and your story of us, and like, you know,
> doing this whole thing, where we want folks to really identify their own call to
> action, because we're all brought into this movement for a certain reason. And I
> think, for me, one of the things that was really exciting was being a part of spaces
> where we were able to have these, these sessions of narrative development and
> story development.

Through narrative building, community members are able to develop their story of self and learn

to influence power through using their own voice. Through assisting residents in developing their

own narratives, they have the opportunity to gain the confidence to use those stories in the

presence of policymakers and government representatives. During their interview, Interviewee B

mentioned that "communication narrative work and like sharing community member stories,"

has been a primary method in the fight against the Chevron refinery in Richmond. Another

community member has

In addition to narrative building, CBE prides itself in providing leadership training and

development for their members. The leadership training that is provided to community members

happens "once a year or a six-week session where we are extensively, you know, going into

issues that inform them about what environmental justice is, why environmental racism is a

different issue, and where they can see the power of the oil companies and how it is affecting us

locally, and beyond" (Interviewee D). These trainings follow in the footsteps of the organization

structure that is "broad, deep, and all-inclusive," depicting the efforts of a People's Organization

(Alinsky 1945, 80). Through following the ideology of a People's Organization, it allows for all

residents, no matter their capacity, experience, or current knowledge to get involved. Even

though the structure of the trainings are flexible, they all have a general structure, but can be altered to fit the needs of each individual community, including Richmond and Wilmington.

Additionally, when speaking to the leadership and members of Communities for a Better Organization, it was emphasized that it is the goal for the leadership trainings curated to push members in two directions, one being that they continue as leaders that are a part of the organization, and the other that they continue to be leaders in other sectors. Alinsky discusses how in order to challenge the strength of existing power, it is key that a People's Organization creates a new power group to take over (1945, 153). Through the work that CBE is doing to curate new community leaders, they are creating this new power group that has political efficacy in the fight against the oil industry. Expanding on this idea, one participant shares that it is the job as an organizer to:

> Continue to uplift the leadership [of CBE] and also have our members move into different areas of the environmental justice sector, and the environmental sector, the political sector, like, you know, at the end of the day, that's how leadership works. And some of us can hold, hold it down on the ground, others can go on to different areas. (Interviewee E)

This interview excerpt demonstrates the way in which CBE and its leadership team are committed to the residents participation and upward mobility, which communicates to the general public how much they understand the voices of residents is critical and this showcases "people power" to its full capacity.

Many of the current CBE leadership team had the ability to climb the "leadership ladder of the organization" through participating in leadership development training that has led to a "transformative organizational model" (Interviewee H) that they now lead with the organization's youth members. This model ensures that the community members who participate in CBE are set up to be the leaders to continue the organization in the future. This is the case for both staff members in Richmond and Wilmington and through the interview process I had the

opportunity to hear the way they climbed the ladder of leadership. One participant details their

experience with the organization over many years and the progression of her roles when sharing:

> I'm a resident in Wilmington. So that is really how a lot of our membership is developed, or the leadership has developed this through our leadership development program, but also a leadership ladder. So I started off as a member volunteer, really just curious, had the opportunity to become an intern and had the opportunity then to try it out as a staff. And so I'm only organizing right now. Right. And there's definitely still, you know, areas of growth for folks to go. And so, you know, that's really the goal is for folks to take my job and have fun. (Interviewee E)

Another participant goes on to share their experience by detailing an involvement timeline

stating:

> Um, so I got started as a CBE member in our East Oakland chapter [...] I went to like some agency task force meeting and CBE was there. I think that one of the organizers[…]she invited me to a meeting and I went, and I had just like, never experienced a meeting like that before where it was very intentional about being, you know, accessible […] So I was like, Why isn't anybody talking about this? Why wasn't my organization like working on this? You know? And how can we support that kind of stuff? So from there on, I just became a more involved member. And went through like, their summer political education, leadership training […] at that point that the youth organizer position was available [in Richmond]. (Interviewee B)

These two excerpts showcase the dedication to get residents involved in the organization at many

various levels. This is significant because it shows how it matters to the organization that people

who are a part of impacted neighborhoods are becoming aware of the issues and getting involved

at a level that puts them in the spaces that are typically not open to them. This within itself is a

method of pushing members to become more politically involved in the movement against the oil

industry because members of the community unlock new "access, and opportunities for our

community members to become part of like, even higher levels of decision making" (Interviewee

H) and can be the players who directly challenge the practices and power of oil companies.

Parallel to the experience of organizing against the oil industry within CBE and climbing

the organizational ladder of leadership that many others have, some CBE members go on to

become advocates for change and comprehensive policies in other sectors. One participant

discusses the way in which they have witnessed that "with the community organizing [of CBE],

people feel empowered enough to venture into new positions" (Interviewee I). This allows for

members of the community to have more capacity to challenge the oil industry in different

sectors of policy and advocacy work. The same participant shares their own experience with how

CBE has pushed them to become involved in different spaces and take their experience and

knowledge gained from CBE through stating:

> I would like to say this for sure. Um, I know, CBE has helped me personally to
> even gain the confidence to run for positions. So right now I'm a Delegate for
> Assembly District 65, which includes San Pedro, Wilmington, and Carson. Those
> are some of the cities within the Harbor Area that it includes. So we see a lot of
> people getting politically involved too, as well. So, you know, because of my
> experience at CBE, I was able to, you know, run for public office, essentially, you
> know, I've been a delegate for about a year and a half now. So, we've been
> pushing for policies that affect all Californians, you know, pretty much writing up
> the Democratic agenda. (Interviewee I)

This empowerment of residents is a force that challenges and eventually disrupts the typical

power of the oil industry because those members who once were organized by CBE in relation to

issues of injustice with oil are continuing to hold companies accountable for what they have

caused. Furthermore, this work that puts a stop to the oil industry by these former CBE members

is not just happening in the cities they belong to, but they are ensuring that these policies they

have pushed for in places such as Richmond and Wilmington are being applied to other oil

industry impacted communities as well.

Transforming the Issue and the Fight

The ability that Communities for a Better Environment possesses to transform the way

residents view their voice and power is a testament to the shift in resiliency of each member and

community as a whole. When speaking to participants about the work done by Communities for a Better Environment, many expressed the upkeep of resiliency in the communities of Richmond and Wilmington as a major part of the success the organization has achieved. The resiliency of the community members in these two locations has been vital to organizing surrounding the power of the oil industry. Resiliency is a prominent characteristic in BIPOC communities because there are issues that date back decades that forced them to be. Communities for a Better Environment recognizes this in their work, and one participant identifies that "in order to be in a frontline neighborhood, you have to, you already have that resiliency factor, we're at a different level, all of us, you know, it happens. But we're all in this resilience factor…You're not just seeing it, you're seeing it intergenerationally as well" (Interviewee E). Many other participants shared this same sentiments, but included the need to recognize that "environmental justice communities, folks shouldn't have to be resilient in the first place" (Interviewee B), which ties back to the importance of recognizing the multitude of issues that caused communities of color to be resilient in the first place. Although this is important to recognize it is important to focus on how resiliency is presented by members and how to keep it from burning out.

Since the communities already possess qualities of resiliency, it is critical to recognize that burnout may happen in the midst of organizing. It is critical to have a space where community members regain motivation to keep on being resilient. To continue the resiliency of members who have been fighting for decades, it is important to ensure that they are not alone in this process. One participant discusses the way that she "think[s] one of the things that I feel like is really important for us to be able to cultivate is a sense of kinship and community at that" (Interviewee E), and this inturn shows to people they are not alone in the process of political

advocacy. To further be able to develop this sense of kinship among its members, Communities for a Better Environment has looked to coalition building.

Coalition building, in the words of one of my participants, is "an organic process" (Interviewee A) that is achieved through gathering like minded individuals who are looking to change a specific practice or system. The coalitions that CBE participates in both case study locations are composed of other organizations that are experts in other sectors of social issues. One participant discusses that this allyship is critical to organizing and keeping resiliency because:

> Allies matter, you know, allies really help us. And so nothing can happen without a strong collaborative team. And so every campaign and every area of our work, we have alliances and coalitions that are built out, you know, these really allow us to one push our EJ (environmental justice) elements and values and continue to advocate in any kind of policy, any kind of on a campaign that would that would, that we may have in that time. That has been extremely necessary. (Interviewee E)

Through having a partnership with these other organizations, CBE is able to provide their members with resources to become more knowledgeable about issues that concern them. This is important because it indicates how CBE is able to provide resources to the members of other organizations within this coalition to educate them on the fight against the oil industry and how it pertains to an issue, such as housing or planning. This education of members creates "grassroots advocates," which inturn shows the act and success of "people power" (Petersen 2006, 348).

Coalitions serve as a unifying factor and allow for community members to understand how they are not only working themselves to challenge or disrupt an industry, rather they have a group of supporters and allies alongside them. One participant describes the power that coalitions have when stating that it is "a great way to empower communities into building solidarity. The community members feel supported, when all their communities come to their aid as well"

(Interviewee D). Coalition building has provided members of the organization a space to interact with others impacted by issues that are many times beyond just environmental justice and find commonalities in values and goals. Through joining coalitions, the members of CBE have been able to be immersed in the goals that many other of the individual organizations are pushing for. With keeping this in consideration and returning to Alinsky's theory of a People's Organization, organizations oftentimes continue "to view each problem of the community as if it was independent of all other problems… [a] static and segmental thinking which regards problems and issues as separate and apart" (1945, 80), which distance these organizations from being a People's Organization.

Separating other socio-economic issues from the environmental issues caused by the oil industry is not a method utilized by Communities for a Better Environment (CBE) in Richmond or Wilmington. Based on my interviews, CBE leadership and members greatly recognize the complexity of issues that intertwine with environmental justice. All participants mentioned a wide range of socio-economic issues that connect environmental justice against the oil industry including racial justice, political suppression, living income, housing, land use, health, food justice, and redlining. Educating the members of the organization on the connectedness of issues emphasizes the concept of "people power" in the work that CBE does (Peterson 2006; Staples 2019; Squires and Chadwick 2009). One participant mentions that during their time with CBE they have become more aware of these issues intersecting and discusses many of them when stating the following:

> Just me personally, like, I've seen how the environmental justice issue is also, of course, connected to racial justice. Like because you see it time and time again like that, who are the residents who are most impacted? Who are frontline residents? It's majority of the time BIPOC folks and communities, low-income communities. And we are the ones who are most impacted, right, throughout the state. Really, you know, so I have seen that. I've also seen how it's tied to,

> honestly, issues of land use…redlining policies that have been placed decades ago, and that's still impacted today, in all aspects of life. (Interviewee C)

As stated by Interviewee C, these issues that intersect and overlap with environmental justice and the power of the oil industry have a long standing history. Through recognizing these issues, community residents are able to gain the opportunity to better address and challenge all of them. This showcases a transformation of goals from being more individualistic and focused on one sole goal to recognizing the interconnectedness of social issues. Through building coalitions, CBE has moved its organization and its members away from individually achieving goals to understanding the power and capabilities collaborating to fight the root causes of all social issues.

In both Richmond and Wilmington, coalitions have served as a key component when pushing political advocacy in spaces beyond CBE. In Richmond, there is the Our Power Coalition, which "started out in the aftermath of the Chevron Fire as the Richmond Environmental Justice Coalition," and has continued on since then to be an active force in the community. The coalition is currently composed of nine local organizations, and is actively doing work in Richmond that has to do primarily with:

> So we're trying to define a Just Transition for Richmond in the broadest terms possible, so that it's not just about the refinery. It's also about food justice, it's about housing justice, it's about the prison industrial complex. All these different issues that are part of the systems of oppression that we need to transform all those systems to make Richmond a better place for the people who live there. And that means life beyond Chevron, with the decommissioning of the refinery being an ultimate goal, and what are the implications…So all these questions are not being looked at, in Richmond our power coalition. (Interviewee A)

This is significant because not only is this coalition actively working towards decommissioning Chevron, they are also actively planning what comes next after this happens and how they will mitigate problems that may arise. Not only is the Our Power Coalition in Richmond working

towards decommissioning the Chevron corporation, but they also have actively worked towards dismantling the power that Chevron holds politically, through training and endorsing candidates who are a part of the Richmond Progressive Alliance (Interviewee F). This coalition has actively shown residents of Richmond that they are dedicated to the people, not to profits and are working to transform the forces of power in the community.

In Wilmington, there is the Stand Together Against Neighborhood Drilling, Los Angeles (STAND LA), which is composed of seven local organizations that have come together nearly 10 years ago to do exactly what their name states, combat the oil industry's neighborhood drilling practices. This coalition "represents communities in South LA and Wilmington, and the majority of them are grassroots like community based organizations, meaning that their organization is structured with a membership base, from the communities of South LA and Wilmington" (Interviewee G), and has been around for provides an additional source of education for the members of the coalition organizations. Through using the voice and leadership of members involved with CBE, this coalition was vital in pushing Los Angeles City Council to pass legislation to "direct the City Attorney and Planning Department to begin to draft an ordinance to declare oil drilling a non-comforming land use and phase it out" (Interviewee G). Because Communities for a Better Environment and their members were aware of the impact of joining a coalition that is focused on a multitude of interconnected issues, they were able to accomplish a major step in the right direction. Through becoming involved with the Richmond Our Power and STAND LA coalitions, CBE members were able to witness first hand the way in which this transformation from a single organization to multiple can be beneficial to many.

The transformation that comes from Communities for a Better Environment members deciding to become more immersed in coalitions and take a political stance on issues beyond

those led by CBE, such as the negative impact of the oil industry, leads to the concept which I call *transformative community resiliency*. This concept, that is introduced to the opening of this data analysis section, of transformative community resiliency is a type of resilience that gives agency to community members as opposed to the existing structures of power. Coalitions play a significant role in establishing the meaning of this type of resilience, as it refers to the ability of a community and its residents to shift all goals of their community organizing from an individual organizational view to a multifaceted coalition-driven view when combating injustice caused by forces of power. This shift in the factors above are key components to building a sense of agency that not only recognizes the existing power dynamic that has caused community members to be resilient, but also pushes members to understand the capability individuals have to change the power dynamic and the way they engage with it politically through an interconnected lense.

Conclusion

Transformative community resiliency is the way Communities for a Better Environment ensures the political efficacy and involvement of their members. Transformative community resiliency focuses on the type of resilience that refers to the ability of a community and its residents to shift its voice, understanding, and practices from an individual organizational viewpoint to a multifaceted coalition viewpoint when combating injustice caused by forces of power. Through sharing the ways in which members can utilize their voices to influence policies and political stances on an issue, such as environmental impacts caused by the oil industry, and following this act with the creation of opportunities to get involved beyond CBE, the organization is transforming the agency residents have in Richmond and Wilmington, California. As stated by a participant in my interview process, "I think that voice and that element of agency

really is transformative" (Interviewee E). As portrayed throughout this capstone paper, voice and agency are the key to a community being able to be transformatively resilient.

Voice and agency are key in transformative community resiliency because these factors are what shift existing power dynamics. In many other cases of resiliency, community members are considered resilient if they are able to continuously withstand any environmental impacts, not if they utilize voice and agency. Transformative community resiliency does not push individuals to simply withstand environmental impacts under existing structures of power, rather it looks to have residents transform existing structures of power through becoming more involved in political action. To do this, it is critical that community members develop their own voice and agency to transform not only themselves or their communities, but the society they are a part of as a whole.

Community organizing that achieves transformative community resiliency among its members fully immerses residents into understanding political spaces and the politics that come with being involved in those spaces. My research showcases the way in which community organizing is a clear and effective example of how to transform both the voices of community members and their confidence in fighting for issues beyond their own. It is important to recognize that in which Communities for a Better Environment ensures political involvement of its members through transformative community resiliency may not be particularly unique to their organization, rather this is the scenario I have used to establish that this type of resiliency exists. In acknowledging the way in which Communities for a Better Environment (CBE) has uses to create change in the political efficacy of its members, it is important to understand what of these same methods of addressing silence and need to be flexible, along with creating new opportunities can be transferred to other organizations to achieve transformative community

resiliency. CBE provides a great framework for other organizations to use in order to ensure that organizing against the oil industry is accomplished with stronger, more confident and transformed community members. The ultimate success of transformative community resiliency within a specific organization is when the organization is no longer necessary and community members are able to transform each other on their own. In the case of Communities for a Better Environment and the residents they work for, this is not necessarily yet fully achieved. Though this is the case, the organization still has made strides, such as in the case of community members becoming leaders, and are still a prime example of an organization on the path of fully achieving this type of resiliency.

This capstone highlights the major role that narrative development and sharing has in creating transformative community resiliency with the members of CBE. When using these narratives, it is critical that the experiences of folks are respected when sharing and when further using them to bring about change in political and social spaces. One participant discusses the way in which ensuring the narrative sharing of members utilized by the organization was in an ethical manner. They emphasize that "our organization's culture [...] it's ready to make sure that people don't feel tokenized, or people do not feel attacked by others, right. And so, we're also being very mindful of how to [...] make sure that we're, we're accountable ourselves" (Interviewee H). This goal should not just be that of CBE, but rather all organizations that use narratives of their members in any form. To ensure this goal is upheld, I recommend that a set of ethical standards of narrative sharing be crafted and enforced.

This research is significant in its value because it serves as a resource to share knowledge on community organizing in relation to the oil industry to achieve political efficacy. It demonstrates the way in which the members of CBE in both Richmond and Wilmington,

California as examples of successful community organizing and how they demonstrate *transformative community organizing*. It serves as an added example of how community organizing can transform communities, in ways that are beyond simply achieving a successful end result for one individual organization or issue. Additionally, this research highlights the work CBE and the coalitions they are apart are actively dismantling structures of power utilizing the voices of their members and pushing for access to new opportunities in various political spaces.

Furthermore, I share this with the desire to further push community members to get involved and continue to show resilience in order to create change in their communities. In regard to the field of Urban and Public Affairs, this project leaves room for individuals to not only expand on my idea of transformative community resiliency, but also explore the way this is achieved in relation to other social issues beyond the oil industry. Also, this thesis leaves room for individuals to explore the ways in which other local organizations may not necessarily be able to achieve transformative community resiliency. This project sheds light for all scholars of this field to take into consideration the voices of the community, those who are living and breathing the issues at hand. The process that I went through to collect data and come to this conclusion demonstrates how scholars in the field are fully capable of shifting from both damage and desire-based research, terms coined by scholar Eve Tuck, if they push forward the voices of community members that are opening up their doors for research to be conducted. Most importantly, it has shown that organizing while prioritizing community is impactful and brings already resilient communities of color closer to success on countywide, statewide, and nationwide levels.

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Appendix A - Interview Questions for Organization/Coalition Leaders and Members

1) Depending on if it is an organizational leader or member resident

   a) *LEADER:* Are you a resident of [Richmond] or [Wilmington]?

      i) If yes, continue with question 1b

      ii) If no, ask: What past relationship do you have with the oil industry, if any?

   b) *RESIDENT:* How long have you lived in [Richmond] or [Wilmington]?

      i) As a resident of [Richmond] or [Wilmington], can you tell me what your relationship with the oil industry has been like?

2) What influence do you see the oil industry having in the community you live/work in?

3) What sparked your interest to join Communities for a Better Environment?

4) From my research, I can see that community organizing is a vital part of the work CBE does. I'd like to ask you a few questions about the details of your organizing:

   a) Who are you targeting when conducting your outreach? How do you make decisions about who to address or which specific policies to intervene in?

   b) What methods of community organizing does the organization use?

   c) What methods have been the most effective in pushing and promoting policy change?

   d) What would you say makes these methods unique?

   e) In many cases, CBE organizes alongside other local organizations in the form of coalitions, why is this the case? What is the impact of organizing in a coalition versus doing it on your own as an organization?

   For leaders who work in both Richmond and Wilmington:

   f) Are there any methods that are utilized differently based on location?

   g) If yes, why is this the case?

5) How does the organization engage members of the community who may not necessarily be a part of CBE?

   a) Have there been any challenges or hesitancy from residents while doing this?

6) The goal of CBE's community organizing is to create lasting solutions for pollution. Many know that lasting solutions often come in the form of policy.

   a) What is the connection that you as an organizer have to the policy or legal component of the work that CBE does?

   b) How do you see the members of CBE interacting with policies?

   c) What successes has the organization had in regard to shifting local and state policy?

   d) On the opposite end of the spectrum, what are the challenges the organization has come across when aiming to shift local and state policy?

7) What shift in the community participation of [Richmond] or [Wilmington] have you witnessed since starting your involvement with Communities for a Better Environment (CBE)?

   a) Would you say your/the community is more resilient?

   b) What role do you believe CBE plays in the community of [Richmond] or [Wilmington] being resilient?

8) Is there any additional information you'd like to share with me today?