DESIGNING FOR EQUITY IN COLLABORATIVE ENVIRONMENTAL GOVERNANCE:

A CASE STUDY OF REGIONAL CLIMATE CHANGE COLLABORATIVES

by

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Collaborative governance is an increasingly popular method for managing complex socio-ecological problems such as climate change. While collaboration seeks to involve diverse stakeholders in the decisions that affect their lives, little research addresses how structural power dynamics impact marginalized groups' ability to exert influence within these processes. Practitioners and scholars commonly assume that inclusive participation will advance equitable participation without critically considering the fundamentally unequal systems in which collaboratives operate. This research expands on Jill Purdy's framework for assessing power in collaborative settings and applies it to six regional climate collaboratives. Using a comparative case study model, interviews were conducted with coordinators and community-based organizations in each case. Their responses illuminated how power is wielded and managed in these groups and how process designers can help balance structural power. The resulting list of strategies are intended to support facilitators to actively promote equitable participation in this emergent form of governance.

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I: INTRODUCTION

As humans face increasingly complex and urgent environmental crises, improving systems for problem-solving and decision-making has never been more critical. Systems of extraction and exploitation have generated disproportionate benefits for some and disproportionate harm to others, a disparity exacerbated by global climate change. Globally and locally, the groups who bear the burden of a changing climate are the same ones who have been marginalized by modern democratic systems. Environmental conflict driven by the unequal distribution of material resources is age-old and embedded within deeply-rooted economic and ecological paradigms (Escobar, 2006. While climate change demands unprecedented action at every scale, leveraging change within local governance can both catalyze scalable action and fundamentally reconstitute democratic systems.

The following research explores the practice of collaborative governance – a promising model for managing highly complex problems that puts stakeholders from all sectors at the helm of planning. I address a particular aspect of multi-stakeholder collaboration whose significance is widely recognized yet undertheorized: the role of power dynamics and approaches for advancing procedural equity. While a considerable body of literature emphasizes that power imbalances significantly affect collaborative processes, analyses of power in related fields often do not recognize power dynamics rooted in multidimensional systems of privilege and marginalization. My project seeks to expand on existing frameworks for assessing power in collaborative settings and identify ways in which power dynamics can be meaningfully managed to further equitable climate planning.

Climate change presents a particularly interesting case study for exploring the role of power in collaboration for many reasons. While it requires sophisticated planning at national and global scales, scholars and practitioners increasingly recognize that climate change is also a local issue. Widespread regulatory mandates are necessary for coordinating action at the state and national action, but local governments are key partners in implementing plans for land use, transportation systems, and infrastructure that support those regulatory frameworks. Municipalities can also act as incubator hubs for novel approaches to climate resiliency before they have political backing at a larger scale. Cities and regions have often outpaced national policymakers in both mitigation and adaptation planning, demonstrating the unique capacity of local actors to efficiently implement

solutions and meaningfully recruit specific constituencies to respond to local threats (Kalesnikaite, 2019).

Climate planning on a local scale also illuminates the same inequities that exist globally – those most responsible for emissions will experience the least negative impacts, and those most vulnerable are the least prepared to react. Further, local policymakers often fail to design decision-making systems that meaningfully allocate power to historically marginalized populations. Unless efforts to foster local resiliency to climate change account for the differential roles of powerholders and vulnerable populations, local responses will continue to reinforce existing systems of injustice and exclusion.

Involving vulnerable populations and conducting effective multi-stakeholder processes have been cited as two of the biggest challenges in local climate adaptation planning (Kirshen et al., 2018). Local climate change response efforts notoriously challenge traditional systems for planning because they require coordination and resource reallocations between public, private, and civil society interests across many scales and timeframes (Chu, Anguelovski, & Roberts, 2017). In response, multi-stakeholder collaborative approaches to climate change planning have become increasingly popular across the United States.

While there is an immense body of literature that explores the subject area of justice-based climate change solutions, this study focuses specifically on the process components that enable effective collaboration within diverse stakeholder partnerships at a local and regional scale. It asks two primary questions. First, how does structural power operate within climate change collaboratives? Second, what tools and strategies can collaboratives use to redistribute power to groups serving marginalized and frontline communities? Certain process design elements identified may be unique to climate change planning, however the resulting recommendations are intended as a resource for any practitioner of collaborative governance. Collaborative decision making in any field has the potential to either promote equity by redistributing power to vulnerable populations or reinforce status quo power relations by empowering already privileged actors. In this project, I seek to support facilitators, coordinators, and conveners of such processes to actively engage in power analysis and in doing so, advance equitable relationships among diverse players.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The rise in collaborative environmental decision making in U.S. policy arenas can be traced to the 1970s when a host of new national environmental regulations made public participation standard practice for many proposed projects with potential environmental consequences. New laws and regulations such as the 1970 National Environmental Policy Act incorporated mechanisms for collecting public feedback on proposed decisions via one-directional communication channels and largely focused on raising awareness about environmental issues (Lee, McQuarrie, & Walker, 2015. Most of these early techniques involved very little public control over decision making and were primarily designed to, as Arnstein defined, "consult" or "inform" communities who would be impacted by policy decisions (1969. As participation grew to be a cornerstone of common governance structures, publics called for greater levels of control and models of engagement developed into more dynamics spaces for sharing information, navigating action in multidimensional policy spheres, and negotiating divergent beliefs and values (Crawford, Beyea, Bode, Doll, & Menon, 2018.

Parallel movements of the same era advocated similar principles of inclusion and self-determination in decision-making structures. The environmental justice movement gained national traction in the 1980s and 1990s, highlighting the disproportionate impact of environmental harms in minority communities. Early environmental justice theory and activism were founded on both distributive and procedural goals; not only should environmental risks, impacts, and benefits be equitably distributed across society, but also that environmental decision-making processes should include the communities most affected by those decisions (Pellow, 2018.

During the same period, the field of conflict resolution presented another alternative approach to collective decision-making and problem solving. Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR gained popularity in the legal field as a way for litigating parties to find mutually satisfactory agreements more efficiently. Formerly used in labor bargaining and international affairs, ADR expanded into civil rights, campus, and community disputes through the creation of the National Center for Dispute Settlement and the Center for Mediation and Conflict Resolution in 1968 (Barrett & Barrett, 2004. Community mediation, the grassroots version of professionalized ADR practices, offered the promise of a "popular justice" in which empowered communities could self-govern and resolve conflicts

nonviolently outside state-dominated legal systems (Merry & Milner, 1995). Despite its diverse applications and histories, a core tenant of conflict resolution is the principle of self-determination. Self-determination asserts the right of all parties to make voluntary and informed decisions, free of coercion (Press & Lurie, 2014).

Governing institutions were also increasingly pressured into engaging stakeholders in their decision-making thanks to the expanding structure of new national regulations and a growing recognition of non-adversarial dispute resolution as a valid alternative to litigation. While natural resource managers were once accustomed to making unilateral decisions or involving stakeholders in largely superficial consultation exercises, they increasingly saw legal and financial incentives to use collaborative decision-making methods rather than face costly litigation from well-organized environmental NGOs. With the Endangered Species Act of 1973 came frequent litigation over management of public lands, illustrated by the Northwest timber wars of the 1990s. The shift from regulating point source water pollution in the Clean Water Act of 1972 to regulating diffuse sources required an increase in active management by multiple parties across urban and rural landscapes (Margerum, 2011). Across sectors, there was growing recognition that environmental problems were inherently complex and required multifaceted management solutions that gave voice to local concerns and perspectives. Environmental mediation and new "negotiated rulemaking" efforts promised a collaborative approach that increased self-determination for communities, all while saving time and money associated with ongoing legal battles.

At the intersection of public participation and dispute resolution, a body of literature and practice emerged to foster ongoing collaborative decision-making by multiple stakeholder groups. While differing in its specific applications, collaboration broadly seeks to build shared understanding between diverse groups over time. Approaches for collaborative decision-making in the environmental field have been called many names, including consensus-building (Innes & Booher, 1999; R. D. Margerum, 2002), public dispute resolution (Susskind, 2008), collaborative rationality (Innes & Booher, 2010), collaborative governance (Ansell & Gash, 2008), environmental conflict management (Clarke & Peterson, 2017), natural resource collaboration (Selin & Chevez, 1995), environmental mediation (Moore, 2013), and others. Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, collaborative approaches to public policy were increasingly institutionalized to handle environmental issues. Although scholarship on these approaches is somewhat dispersed, they share key attributes. Each one

theorizes an alternative to traditional legal and policy decision-making processes that involve diverse stakeholders in the decisions that impact their lives. Due to the growing social and ecological complexities of modern environmental problems such as climate change, collaborative approaches have become an increasingly popular option for management (Averyt et al., 2018; Brink & Wamsler, 2018; Kalesnikaite, 2019; Lemieux, Thompson, Slocombe, & Schuster, 2015).

Despite growing popularity, environmental dispute resolution and collaboration have their fair share of critics. Many doubt whether mediation could ever truly operate free of coercion between high-power and low-power groups, such as industry and community organizations (Kahn, 1994; Susskind, 2008). Others have pointed out that by selecting only a few representatives from a stakeholder group to participate in mediation that geographically dispersed interests and the broader public good will be sacrificed (Brower, 2016). Still others question whether centering human interests in environmental management could possibly lead to adequate protection for the nonhuman world (Brower, 2016; Kahn, 1994). The success of conflict resolution also commonly requires focusing on a discrete conflict, meaning that ongoing, deep-seated questions of ethics or policy are often deemed beyond the scope of such forums (Mayer, 2004). This narrow focus can easily result in the exclusion of groups concerned with systemic issues of environmental justice, economic inequality, and oppression. Further, conflict resolution has been criticized for diverting energy away from social movements by diverting energy needed for escalation into short-term solutions (Lach, 1996). Many of these critiques highlight the role of power in environmental negotiations, a topic explored in depth later in this section.

Participation, Democracy, & Inequality

At the heart of methodologies for participatory decision-making lie various assumptions about democracy and its ability to rectify social inequalities. Often scholars have conflated the very act of democratic participation with the advancement of social justice. This conflation tends to hinge on vague ideas about community empowerment and trust-building between people and institutions. Some scholars on participatory democracy have posited that participation is itself a revolutionary exercise that empowers citizens to "seize their collective political fates by reclaiming the political sphere as self-determining agents" (Menser, 2018). These assumptions, while valid as subjective experiences of participation, fail to interrogate the assumptions underpinning a belief that democratic

practices will produce fair outcomes. It is abundantly clear that Western models of representative democracy governed by majority-rule have perpetually created policies that disproportionately harm low status social groups. No decision making processes is inherently just, and right-based systems provide crucial safeguards to ensure basic protections for the most vulnerable (Hampshire, 2000). In fact, as Iris Marion Young highlights in her seminal work *Inclusion and Democracy*, when structural inequalities of wealth and power already exist, democratic processes are likely to reinforce them rather than change them (2000). Leaders in the field of consensus-building have suggested that collaboration furthers democratic values by moving past the problems of majority-rule, broad representation, and adversarial decision-making (Susskind, 2008). However, many collaborative planning efforts have failed to engage broader questions about restructuring the political and economic relationships that underpin their concept of democratic participation (Chu et al., 2017).

Scholars have also pointed to the ways in which new forms of deliberative democracy may be coopted by elite authorities to legitimize existing corporate and political rule (Lee et al., 2015). Similar concerns have been echoed in the environmental justice literature; inclusive practices have often meant recognition of community leaders by state actors, resulting in the "siphoning of grassroots energy away from other key goals" and very little policy change that benefits marginalized communities (Pellow, 2018, 12). This sentiment has been echoed in many critiques of modern public participation exercises.

As participation in policymaking has grown, it has become increasingly evident that inclusion alone is insufficient to meaningfully incorporate the perspectives of marginalized groups. Despite natural resource managers dedicating unprecedented amounts of time and resources to public involvement, these efforts have seldom eased resource conflicts or actually increased public satisfaction if they focused too heavily on content and neglected to design fair procedures (Lawrence, Daniels, & Stankey, 1997). This may be mediated by a variety of factors, including whether collaboratives use a top-down or bottom-up approach and how the very notion of the "negotiation table" is constructed (Bauer & Steurer, 2014; Rongerude & Sandoval, 2016). While some collaborative practices do meaningfully distribute decision-making power more equitably than others, there is very little evidence that marginalized communities believe participation alone inherently delivers equity or combats existing inequalities.

Inclusion Vs. Equity

Perhaps the most widely cited component critical to collaborative success is the inclusion of diverse perspectives. The goals of collaboration are often characterized broadly as creating better solutions and bridging diverse perspectives through improved deliberation and shared understanding. Although collaborative groups range widely in their intent and capacity for resolving conflict between groups, a fundamental goal of collaboration is to work across difference (Innes & Booher, 2010). This rests on an implicit assumption that groups with any amount of privilege will be able to secure a seat at the collaborative negotiating table. While diversity is widely lauded as central to collaborative success, little attention is paid to what kinds of diversity are valuable, how to increase diversity, and what it means for collaborative groups to meaningfully empower diverse actors.

When collaboratives do succeed in bringing diverse interests and identities to the table, power differentials inevitably multiply. It is critical to consider how different forms of power manifest in collaborative settings and how these dynamics may perpetuate harm against groups who have historically been marginalized by existing systems. If the goal of collaboration is to uphold principles of self-determination and procedural justice, then processes should be designed to intentionally and meaningfully include stakeholders whose interests have been left out from traditional policy spheres.

Strategies to manage power differentials generally fall into one of two approaches – promoting equality or equity. While it is common practice in participatory process design to consider mechanisms for engaging diversity and managing power (Bryson, Quick, Schively Slotterback, & Crosby, 2013), these strategies too often stop short at equality-based methods. Equal treatment presumes that by including new actors and creating an even playing field at the table, power can be balanced (albeit temporarily) within a negotiation. Equitable methods, on the other hand, allocates more power and access to those who have historically been negotiating their interests at a disadvantage. Across the environmental collaboration literature, there is a strong tendency to equate equality and equity – assuming that providing equal access to decision-making spaces will automatically advance social equity. Some differentiate between "formal equality" and "substantive equality" (the latter taking into account differential needs) but fail to grasp the different practical demands of each, emphasizing procedural fairness and an "even-handedness in the way interest groups or individuals are considered in a decision making process" (Hampton, 1999, 165).

Though less common, equity-based models for collaborative process design are gaining traction, particularly in the field of planning. Meléndez and Martinez-Cosio (2019) note that, "since people do not come to participatory processes with equal access to power and resources, differentiated policies and practices are required in order to facilitate equitable participation of underrepresented communities" (4). Recent models for community engagement written by grassroots organizing groups argue that equity-based participation models lie one step beyond Arnstein's ladder of participation – rather than stopping at empowerment, government should make way for full community ownership by 'deferring to' communities as decision makers themselves (González, 2019). For the purposes of this research, equitable practices are defined as those that, at minimum, 1) allocate *more* access, power, or resources to correct for historic patterns of marginalization and exclusion, and 2) are grounded in an assessment of the institutional barriers that restrict equal engagement (Clark, 2018). A compilation of relevant strategies and tools will conclude this section.

Concepts of Power

One possible reason why environmental collaboration scholars have not theorized heavily about equity in process design is that conceptualizations of power in the literature are extremely varied and often ignore systems of power perceived to be 'outside' the realm of collaboration. There is widespread agreement that in order for collaboration to be effective, power should be balanced at least enough so that parties can effectively advocate for their own interests. But while power is commonly acknowledged as a critical consideration in the literature, scholars and practitioners lack unified definitions, theories, and frameworks to assess power dynamics. Despite broad claims about inclusivity in collaborative management, power imbalances are clearly not relegated to "observable relationships between individual actors and institutions, but manifest at a range of scales and in different social spaces" (Dandy, Fiorini, & Davies, 2014, 312). A holistic framework of power is needed to substantiate claims of increased 'power-sharing' between sectors in collaboration theory.

It is important to recognize that different disciplines conceptualize power at different scales; while psychology and its related fields tend to highlight personal power dynamics within groups, sociology and political science investigate the systemic power structures in which individuals operate (Sell, Lovaglia, Mannix, Samuelson, & Wilson, 2004).

While the field of collaboration and conflict resolution are highly interdisciplinary, they rely heavily on social psychology to explain in-process dynamics. Recent work has increasingly acknowledged the wide variety of settings, purposes, and challenges faced by practitioners, and more readily cites power differentials and patterns of marginalization as barriers to group decision-making (R. D. Margerum & Robinson, 2016). However, historically most collaboration frameworks have tended to focus on at-the-table power dynamics divorced from broader systems of power, privilege, and oppression.

Before exploring the power framework that will scaffold this remainder of this paper, it is worth noting how two scholars have conceptualized power in collaborative settings. Gaventa (2005) describes the "power cube" as three dimensions defining public participation contexts: place (local, national, global), space (closed, invited, and claimed), and dynamics (visible, hidden, invisible). Fraidenburg & Strever's (2004) typology of power includes social power (societal context and identity-based privilege), role (individual positioning within institutions), and personal power (charisma and persuasiveness). While a full review of power frameworks is beyond the scope of this paper, the following sections describe four categories in which power dynamics manifest in collaboration theory and practice.

Power as Personal Influence

Power is broadly defined in the collaboration literature as stakeholders' ability to exert influence over process outcomes (Margerum, 2011). This influence has often been interpreted by scholars and practitioners as individual stakeholders' personal attributes, behaviors, and ability to manipulate process mechanisms. In Lucy Moore's seminal book on environmental mediation, she describes a multi-sector collaborative process to rewrite emissions standards for small, motorized equipment in which one woman representing an environmental nonprofit was consistently uncooperative throughout many months of negotiations and ultimately unilaterally blocked consensus. Moore describes this move as the weaker side becoming "all-powerful" in the end (Moore, 2013, 189). Although Moore does acknowledge that industry groups have greater access to resources, technical information, and a variety of other tools of influence, her description of power in this situation centers the power of one individual to impact group dynamics. Ability to veto is seen as an "all-powerful" tool granted by process mechanisms, whereby power relations are subverted in a moment. While many processes adopt 'consensus minus one' rules to avoid

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this problem, such solutions can effectively negate the negotiating power of minority interests if they are already underrepresented.

Much of the literature on conflict resolution and natural resource collaboration depicts a similar view of power wielded through individual behaviors. Jill Purdy (2016) calls this "episodic" power, or power that is expressed through discrete interactions rather than institutional arrangements. While it is widely accepted that influential individuals can either promote or inhibit groups' ability to form trust and problem solve, personality-based views of power ignore the multidimensional nature of power within social systems.

Perhaps due to this narrow framing, many facilitators and mediators insist that collaborative leaders can overcome this challenge by "eliminating" or "managing" power asymmetries within groups (Zellner, Hoch, & Welch, 2012). In response to claims that collaboration may not benefit less powerful groups, proponents tend to emphasize that neutral process facilitators have an ethical obligation to ensure processes that are "fair, efficient, stable, and wise in the eyes of all parties" (Susskind, 2008, 196). Power is seen as a force that can be fully equalized through better conversations, trust-building, and information sharing (Levesque, Calhoun, Bell, & Johnson, 2017). While these activities likely build trust and group cohesion, claiming that power can be entirely "equalized" exposes a misdiagnosis of structural power that systemically afford certain groups privilege at others' expense. This limited concept of power as personal influence has led to the widely accepted belief that simply by recruiting a group of stakeholders with diverse perspectives and allowing neutral third parties to guide deliberation, that fair outcomes will emerge.

Power as Institutional Control

Other scholars have acknowledged that collaboration functions within larger systems of power and access. Institutional power is expressed through the strength and breadth of stakeholder networks (Cuttsab et al., 2010), alignment with political power (Walker & Hurley, 2004), access to economic resources (Brisbois & de Loë, 2017; Kretser, Beckmann, & Berger, 2018), and alignment with dominant cultural values (Castro & Nielsen, 2001). Political ecology scholars point out that natural resource collaboration is inherently nested within power-infused social relations that are inherently economic, ecological, and cultural (Escobar, 2006; Walker & Hurley, 2004). Two primary expressions of institutional power are access to resources and access to authority.

Resource power expresses itself in collaboration settings as socioeconomic status, class background, educational attainment, perceived wealth, and organizational status. In a practical sense, access to resources determines which stakeholder representatives are funded by their organizations to attend meetings, dedicate staff time, and fund collaborative administration. Politically, discrepancies in technical, financial, and institutional capacities between stakeholder groups can lead to well-resourced players participating half-heartedly in collaborative efforts in order to block any action that threatens their bottom line, effectively preventing under-resourced groups from defending their interests (Brisbois & de Loë, 2017). Access to resources has even been proven to impact basic collaborative behaviors such as empathetic perspective-taking, as demonstrated by a study in which groups who lost resources during a simulated collaborative water management exercise reported the lowest perspective-taking scores than all other groups (Wald, Segal, Johnston, & Vinze, 2017). The lack or loss of relative financial power can be a significant cause for parties to disengage from collaborative efforts.

Access to authority is another fundamental power differential that exists in any collaborative effort between multiple sectors. While certain stakeholders represent or have longstanding relationships with traditional decision-making structures, others obtain political power from informal grassroots efforts that often target traditional authorities. Collaborative approaches like mediation require familiarity and buy-in to legal systems, leaving groups who have historically been kept out of such systems at a severe financial and cultural disadvantage (Castro & Nielsen, 2001). Collaborative processes can either meaningfully redistribute this decision-making capacity or be co-opted by existing authorities to legitimize their power through the "performance of participation" (Huisman, 2014). State agencies considering local natural resource co-management cite reluctance to share decision making authority with rural and indigenous actors out of fear they will lose legitimacy in policy spaces, suffer decreased budgets, and lose control over conventional scientific conservation priorities (Castro & Nielsen, 2001). Studies have repeatedly shown that shifting from institutional decision-making structures to collaborative governance is an opportunity for increased democratic capacity *or* an opportunity for further consolidation of power by relatively few elite interests (Chu et al., 2017).

Power as Scope-setting & Framing

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Another important element of power in collaborative settings is groups' relative abilities to control cultural conversations that frame policy conversations and shape social and political norms (Dandy, Fiorini, & Davies, 2014). Context-shaping is a far-reaching and often hard-to-see source of structural power that reinforces the preferences and worldviews of groups with existing control and influence over cultural narratives. External political and social factors have very real impacts as collaborative groups sit down to decide on their goals and objectives together. Defining an issue, also commonly referred to as issue 'framing', is an activity particularly prone to reinforcing dominant narratives, knowledge, and priorities, and often excludes stakeholders who may have a vested interest in the problem but don't define it in the same way. Purdy (2016) describes these frames as produced by "logics", or fundamental systems of belief and order that dictate societal behaviors and norms. Purdy point out that stakeholders who align closely with the dominant logic in a collaborative setting will experience greater structural privilege in that group. Different institutions adhere to different shared logics, and by replicating the dominance of a logic, collaborative groups may be asking non-dominant groups to participate using modes of interaction that counter their identities and worldviews.

Examples of issue framing can be found at every scale and tend to be most impactful in the formative stages of any collaborative effort. A study of collaborative deer management cites how certain stakeholders controlled the process of agenda-setting by portraying the conflict as between two primary cultural groups: "traditional deer managers" (hunters) and critics of any deer management. By calling forth specific cultural narratives and preexisting social frameworks, conveners of these processes exerted significant influence over the collaboratives' scope of work and the political players deemed important. A collaborative effort in a deeply divided political context in California was seen as stacked in favor of current political regimes because a newly elected County Board of Supervisors unilaterally framed the collaborative's goals using language about preserving natural habitats, open spaces, and science-based management plans (Walker & Hurley, 2004). In a more extreme case, a study of public participation in Amsterdam demonstrates how the city framed the discursive space for participation by offering pre-determined options, all of which supported fundamental policy goals to upgrade old housing developments and displace long-time residents. By offering few possible scenarios and not delegating any real decision-making power to tenants, they created an illusion of participation that merely served to legitimize premade policy decisions (Huisman, 2014). As noted by practitioners of

intercultural dialogue, higher power groups tend to enter deliberation with the goal of improving communication, while lower power groups approach the same issue with the goal of changing the status quo power dynamics (Tint et al., 2017). Preferencing certain cultural narratives or limiting the scope of options deemed legitimate can be a subtle way that existing powerholders continue to shape planning conversations and uphold systems of dominance.

Scope-setting power can also be expressed through the selection of collaboration participants. Which groups are deemed relevant to participate in a collaborative effort often reflects the preexisting definition of an issue. In the case of climate change, where there exists a large philosophical divide between groups who see the problem as fundamentally technological and groups who see it as the failure of entire social and economic paradigms, the makeup of the table itself can reflect deep-seated beliefs and priorities.

Power as Information & Knowledge

Familiarity and adherence to dominant forms of knowledge production is another way power is expressed in collaborative settings (Hegger, Lamers, Van Zeijl-Rozema, & Dieperink, 2012; Levesque et al., 2017). Access to technical information, research capacity, and formal educational training can all act as points of access or barriers to equal participation for stakeholder groups. Particularly in environmental management contexts, scientific knowledge is given preference above all other systems of knowledge (McDermott, 2009). In a study of collaborative watershed management in Arizona, researchers demonstrated this power continuum by measuring the social networks each participant shared information with, demonstrating that participants' beliefs about the role of scientific experts in policy greatly predicted their centrality within the powerful ingroup (Cuttsab et al., 2010).

While most environmental management in the U.S. is dominated by Western values and science, indigenous-led movements struggle continuously for equal recognition of their traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) grounded in non-Western ontological perspectives. While the environmental governance literature often cites a need for "joint knowledge production" that serves the needs of groups with heterogenous worldviews, frameworks for effectively integrating this kind of diversity are undertheorized and often fail to meaningfully interrupt the dominance of Western science-based management (Hegger et al., 2012). In attempts to acknowledge value in indigenous knowledge systems,

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collaborative governance regimes involving indigenous actors have sometimes further coopted traditional knowledge under the guise of integration. King (2004) notes that "exploitation of TEK may turn out to be worse than the indifference and neglect that until very recently characterized the attitude of western scientists to traditional knowledge" (166). Every governing institution, collaborative or otherwise, privileges certain knowledge systems over others, giving certain stakeholders greater legitimacy and power over potential outcomes.

Proposing the Power Framework

For the purposes of this paper, the latter three categories which pertain to structural power imbalances – institutional power, scope-setting power, and informational power – serve as the foundation for identifying and explaining power dynamics in collaborative groups (see Figure 1). This proposed framework builds on Jill Purdy's (2012) framework for assessing power in collaborative governance. Purdy stresses the multidimensional, dynamic and complex nature of power in collaboration, drawing on Hardy and Phillips' (1998) typology of power sources as participants' authority, resources, and discursive legitimacy. Authority refers to groups' legitimacy and influence to exercise their influence within a process, whether through official decision-making responsibilities or power delegated to non-state actors. Resource-based power refers to both monetary and non-monetary capacities to do work and access knowledge. Discursive legitimacy describes the power of groups to leverage certain cultural narratives, norms, and logics to increase their influence and manage conversations. In a 2016 expansion, Purdy also contributes an exploration of structural power dynamics within collaborative environmental governance, noting that power is expressed through both episodic influence and larger systems of institutional logic and hierarchy.

I reorganize primary themes of power expression from Purdy's framework in two ways. First, I separate control of information from discursive legitimacy and resource-based power due to the extremely privileged position of Western science and technical data collection skills in environmental management. Second, I broaden the scope of discursive legitimacy to include broader ideas about privileged cultural narratives and issue framing. Access to resources and authority are brought together under the category of institutional power but remain distinct themes.

Figure 1. The Power Framework		
Power Type	**Expressions of Power Type**	**Authors Referenced**
Institutional	• Strength & breadth of networks • Alignment with political power • Alignment with dominant cultural values • Socioeconomic status • Organizational reputation • Educational attainment • Control of financial resources • Formal decision-making authority	• Cuttsab et. al., 2010 • Walker & Hurley, 2004 • Brisbois & de Loë, 2017 • Kretser, Beckmann, & Berger, 2018 • Castro & Nielsen, 2001 • Wald, Segal, Johnston, & Vinze, 2017 • Chu et al., 2017
Scope-Setting & Framing	• Ability to shape dominant cultural and political norms • Ability to define policy issues and agendas • Definition of potential outcomes • Selection of collaborative participants	• Dandy, Fiorini, & Davies, 2014 • Purdy, 2016 • Walker & Hurley, 2004 • Huisman, 2014 • Tint et al., 2017
Informational	• Familiarity and adherence to dominant forms of knowledge production • Access to technical information, research capacity, and training	• Hegger, Lamers, Van Zeijl-Rozema, & Dieperink, 2012 • Levesque et al., 2017 • McDermott, 2009 • King, 2004

The second dimension of Purdy's framework adds three contexts of power to the above typology: participants, process design, and content. The framework used in this study will focus primarily on participants and process design. Less emphasis will be given to content, although when discussing equitable participation in climate change planning, it is impossible (and possibly counterproductive) to truly separate process from content. Content is deemphasized because there is significantly more existing research on equity-based outcomes in the environmental governance literature than equity-informed process mechanisms (McDermott, 2009). The complete framework addresses institutional, scope-setting, and informational power within the contexts of participant inclusion and process mechanics.

Importantly, while this project seeks to focus on process recommendations applicable to any environmental governance setting (and ideally any collaborative governance setting), it is worth noting that the content area of climate planning complicates traditional roles and structures in unique ways. Climate change has been dubbed a "wicked" problem, one that cannot be explained through one definition and whose solutions will never be complete or perfect. Resolution of "wicked" problems inherently call for solutions that reach beyond the imagination of the society that generated them (Brown, Harris, & Russell, 2010). Therefore, climate change collaboration requires creative approaches that do not merely replicate current decision-making models, but actively imagine new possibilities and pathways for inclusive participation.

Tools for Equitable Engagement

While the above framework can help explain the ways power operates, correcting power differentials between groups requires strategies for manipulating power at many scales. In addition to proposing and applying the power framework, this research seeks to identify practical tools and strategies for advancing equitable participation. Thus, what follows is a brief review of tools from the fields of planning, public administration, and conflict resolution to engage groups with low structural power in decision making processes.

Participatory governance can be designed to meaningfully engages diverse communities and ultimately shift power to marginalized stakeholder groups. While equality-based strategies traditionally focus on creating the minimum conditions for all stakeholders to participate – such as ensuring access to information, balancing speaking time, ensuring the ability to speak freely without coercion, creating group agreements based on mutual respect, etc. – equity-based strategies give disproportionate weight to the needs of low-power groups (Karpowitz, 2014). This review looks at three broad categories these tools fall into: 1) increasing access to the table, 2) creating alternatives to the table, and 3) balancing power at the table. Given that the collaboratives included in this study are designed to be permanent bodies that work on a wide variety of goals, it is assumed that designing equitable structures will pervade engagement at every stage of policy – from setting agendas, to developing policy, to overseeing project implementation. As aptly suggested by Walker & Hurley (2004), "If we simply assume that collaboration gets 'beyond' politics, and that success or failure hinges on procedural questions we may be building a

conceptual 'toolbox' that is missing critical tools – and we may find ourselves disappointed with the results." (748). Documenting the 'toolboxes' employed by practitioners in diverse fields of practice is a first step towards identifying the kinds of process techniques that help to balance power in its myriad forms.

Increasing Access to the Table

In keeping with the founding ideals of collaboration, it is critical that all stakeholders who are affected by an issue have at least the option to participate in decisions about it. When decision making spaces are designed by and for dominant groups, increasing access with an equity approach requires critically assessing and overcompensating for barriers that have excluded particular groups. One multi-stakeholder climate adaptation process in East Boston drew on relationships with neighborhood associations to lead community workshops in which neighborhood delegates, agencies, the City, and others identified adaptation priority locations based on the needs and values of the City's most vulnerable neighborhoods (Kirshen et al., 2018). Another study documents a series of neighborhood consensus conferences (one type of highly local collaborative planning exercise) to engage vulnerable communities in Saint Paul, Minnesota in conversations that directly linked climate change vulnerability to participants' personal experiences of economic instability and exclusion from mainstream environmentalism (Phadke, Manning, & Burlager, 2015). These examples demonstrate the power of intentional recruitment and collective issue framing. Equitable climate change planning centers the needs of vulnerable residents and addresses the climate impacts that matter the most to communities experiencing them (BayCAN Equity Work Group, Salz, Ghoghaie-Ipakchi, & Armenta, n.d.).

In traditional conflict resolution practice, the mediator's first role is to identify key parties to a conflict. While this selection process does risk reflecting the internal biases of the mediator, the use of a third party is lauded as good practice for reducing selection bias by any one group. It is considered a best practice to ask groups during initial stakeholder interviews if the third party has missed anyone who should be included at the table (McCorkle, 2015). Early recruitment, active network building, in-depth stakeholder interviews, and periodically reviewing participation are all tools that help facilitators assess individual stakeholders' needs.

Meléndez & Martinez-Cosio (2019) call for the use of design thinking when engaging diverse communities in local planning arenas. They emphasize that participation spaces are

a collection of design decisions – not static structures – and must be flexible to accommodate the needs of underrepresented communities at any stage in a process. Common methods for reducing barriers include changing meeting times to accommodate diverse work schedules; providing translation services; offering food, childcare, and stipends; engaging in formal, targeted recruitment in specific communities; providing education on technical issues (Brisbois & de Loë, 2017). Adaptability is critical for designing spaces that can quickly respond to the needs of groups who experience intersecting social vulnerabilities.

Alternatives to the Table

Rongerude & Sandoval (2016) critique the very notion of the "table" in collaboration theory, asserting that collaboration processes around the metaphorical table reflect institutions of power and privilege that continuously exclude and marginalize groups whose "very right to occupy space" is contested (319). They propose that bypassing elite structures and meeting communities where they already are – in the streets, in neighborhood organizations, and cultural venues – constitutes more authentic engagement than bringing them to the traditional negotiating table. In the context of collaborative governance, where members are tasked with representing entire stakeholder constituencies, creating alternatives likely requires creating additional venues for direct community participation that drives collaboratives' work.

In the field of deliberative democracy, 'enclave deliberation' refers to additional spaces outside the table in which marginalized voices have the opportunity to confer with each other outside the contexts that are likely to replicate dynamics of inequality (Karpowitz, 2014). Separate participatory tables have be critical for including diverse language groups, such as the creation of a Spanish Language Committee in one Chicago Participatory Budgeting process (Meléndez & Martinez-Cosio, 2019). This approach also mirrors the use of 'affinity spaces' in anti-racist facilitation practices. Affinity groups are spaces for non-white participants to process their experiences with race separately from white participants, in an effort to not perpetuate racialized harms during a process meant to reduce them (Resolutions Northwest, 2020a). While these approaches seek to add tables rather than replace them, they contest the notion that diverse stakeholders *should* sit together in one room when power differentials hinder beneficial communication. Still, these tables are only effective in collaborative decision-making contexts if they are delegated real

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power, rather than simply creating separate streams of work.

Balancing Power

Managing power differentials at the table requires a dual focus on uplifting marginalized voices and changing the table itself to reflect non-dominant cultural norms and practices. Processes that remain 'neutral' in the context of systemic power imbalances are not in fact neutral – they inevitably uphold the inequitable systems in which they were created. Reevaluating the concept of "neutrality" in participatory processes is central to designing systems that subvert power differentials. In mediation, mediators who exert principled influence over agreements have been called "muscle mediators" or "activist mediators" (Forester & Stitzel, 1989); while uncommon, this model has been considered particularly useful to counteract certain parties' negotiating disadvantages due to power differentials. Further, it is common practice in conflict resolution and transformation to recruit facilitation teams that reflect the identities of the communities involved in conflict. Ensuring that co-leaders understand the culture and values of participants can help marginalized groups feel more at ease and foster greater community ownership of the process (Tint et al., 2017). Equity-informed mediation and facilitation strategies center those who are most impacted by an issue at every stage in a process, continuously preferencing process design choices that benefit (and do not burden) marginalized participants. Mapping every parties' power and privilege at multiple scales – internal, interpersonal, institutional, systemic, and cultural/historical – as part of an intake process can help facilitation teams contextualize power dynamics at the table in broader systems (Resolutions Northwest, 2020b).

True inclusivity of underrepresented and marginalized voices also requires attention to communicative norms and frameworks. Young (2000) distinguishes between two dimensions for increasing inclusion – external inclusion relates to the issues of access to the table (outlined above), while internal inclusion deals with peoples' ability to have their claims considered and treated with respect within a forum. As established previously, power often operates through extremely subtle cultural differences in which dominant and subordinate socio-political relationships are firmly established but hard to pinpoint. According to feminist scholars, communicative inclusion requires moving beyond rationalist views of objective, disembodied knowledge and towards a relational, subjective discourse in which individuals' personal experiences, memories, and non-verbal modes of

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expression are valued (Pajnik, 2006). In collaboratives, this may look like increased use of storytelling, personal sharing, or non-Western knowledge systems.

In articulating a post-colonial approach to conflict resolution, Brigg & Bleiker (2011) articulate several approaches for getting past white-dominated ways of thinking and relating to people. They include de-centering highly reason-based logic to make space for emotion and lived experience; de-centering speech as the only form of agreement-building; maintaining highly flexible and contextualized processes; expanding notions of time to include the non-linear and cyclical; seeing individuals as inseparable from relationships; and making space for myth and magic. While the depth of these strategies stretch beyond the scope of this paper, it is worth recognizing the incredible variety and subtlty of hegemonic cultural norms; acceptance of emotion, patterns of speech, and concepts of time all carry implicit cultural assumptions that include some and exclude others.

Additionally, strategies for effective collaboration between scientists, policy makers, and community stakeholders often necessitate effective translation of scientific knowledge into usable information, particularly in the case of climate projections and downscaling climate data (Briley, Brown, & Kalafatis, 2015). Balancing informational power may also include providing extra technical training to groups with low formal educational attainment or providing dominant cultural groups extra training on non-Western forms of knowledge production.

III: METHODS

The following research stems from my personal interest in building new systems of governance capable of addressing social inequalities while mitigating global climate change. As a deeply complex and interconnected socio-ecological problem, climate change poses unprecedented risks to my generation – and more immediately, under-resourced communities across the globe. I became interested in how to institutionalize just systems of governance capable of tackling these dual problems at a community scale. This interest led me to join a research team documenting the formation of local and regional climate collaboratives across the U.S. This project – led by Professor Rich Margerum in the School of Planning, Public Policy, and Management and Steve Adams, former Director of Urban Resilience with the Institute for Sustainable Communities – looks at over 20 cases to answer an under-theorized question in the collaboration literature: how do collaborative groups form? Interviews for the broader project – referred to hereafter as the Climate Resilience project – asked founding members and coordinators about the conditions leading up to a group's formation, important steps in each formal launch, initial deliberations about scope and goals, and key players involved at the outset. My involvement on the project began in the Spring of 2020. Through contact with the case studies, I was able to curate a smaller set of case studies to answer additional questions about power and equity in collaborative governance.

My research addresses two fundamental questions. First, how does structural power operate within climate change collaboratives? Second, what tools and strategies can collaboratives use to redistribute power to groups serving marginalized and frontline communities? I used a multi-comparative case study model to answer this question through document review and semi-structured interviews.

Of the cases selected by the Climate Resilience team, I set out to select six groups to include in a second round of interviews specifically related to power and equity. Three of these groups were selected as the 'equity cases', and for each of these a 'comparison case' was identified in the same geographic region. Altogether, this selection process produced three pairings, each comprised of one 'equity case' and one 'comparison case' in the same area. This comparative model was useful for several reasons. First, it controls slightly for the number of case-specific variables that impacted groups' adoption of equity principles. Second, it helped in determining if the equity principles had clear influence on each group's

decisions and outcomes. Third, it was possible to not only identify reasons why certain stakeholder groups chose to participate in collaborative initiatives, but also explore reasons why they might *not* be involved (gaps in recruitment, barriers to participation, misaligned values/priorities, etc.). Exploring stakeholders' reasons for not participating in collaboration illuminated additional valuable insights into how collaboratives can design more inclusive spaces.

  For this multiple comparative case study, I employed a combination of qualitative research methods and qualitative analysis of interview transcripts. Each stage of data collection and analysis was grounded in the power framework outlined above. Yin (2003) establishes that case study research is appropriate for using careful observation of particular phenomena for the purpose of expanding existing theories (10), which is exactly what this research seeks to do.

Selecting the Equity & Comparison Cases

  Using the Climate Resilience project interviews as well as publicly available documents (e.g. websites, meeting notes, founding documents, annual reports, and rosters), I initially selected seven collaboratives that made some public and explicit attempt to prioritize equity in their work. This was determined in one of three ways. First, I reviewed the list of member organizations participating in each collaborative group and searched each of their websites for indication that they serve underrepresented communities and/or focus on environmental justice in their work. Second, I reviewed the collaborative group's website for keywords indicating a focus on the needs of vulnerable, underrepresented, or marginalized communities. These keywords include but were not limited to: "disadvantaged communities", "vulnerable populations", "social equity", "economic justice", and "public health".[1] Third, I reviewed interview transcripts from the Climate Resilience project and identified collaborative coordinators who mentioned engaging with underrepresented stakeholders and/or prioritizing the climate planning concerns of vulnerable communities. An equity case study is defined broadly as any collaborative group that discussed the equity impacts of their work and/or recruited members from outside traditional climate policymaking spheres (e.g., community-based organizations, groups focused on social or

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[1] It is well supported that the roots of climate vulnerability are linked to social factors such as poverty, housing instability, poverty, and access to health care (Yuen, Yurkovich, Grabowski, & Altshuler, 2017).

environmental justice, minority community leaders, and small NGOs). Several terms will be used throughout this paper to describe groups who have historically been excluded from climate policy conversations and who experience disproportionate impacts of climate change. They include 'marginalized communities', 'frontline communities', 'underserved communities', and 'impacted communities'. While these terms are in no way synonymous with each other, there is significant enough overlap in this context that they are used somewhat interchangeably to describe the stakeholder groups included in this study.

After identifying several established collaboratives that met my criteria as 'equity case studies' for the purposes of this research, I then attempted to find 'comparison cases' in each of those regions. The comparison cases are collaboratives that did not publicly and explicitly prioritize equity content nor participation.[2] In order to reasonably compare equity groups with their comparison case counterparts, it was necessary to select comparison cases in similar geographies shaped by comparable climate risks and political climates (although, with so few cases, it was impossible to control for all contextual variables). Five potential comparison cases were identified that met these criteria. One of the five was disqualified because it was comprised of exclusively government actors, thus excluding community-based stakeholders by definition. One final comparison case was excluded due to lack of responsiveness to interview outreach emails. This left a final list of six case studies, including three equity cases and three comparison cases (see Figure 2). The three pairings are geographically diverse (New England, Florida, and California) to considers a wide range of political and geographic contexts.

Document Review

In addition to preliminary scans of keywords on the collaboratives' websites, a more in-depth document review was conducted to better understand how each case study characterizes its work publicly. While it was difficult to identify perfectly consistent documentation across cases, because each collaborative uses different planning systems and makes varying amounts of information public, I collected documents with two key pieces of information for each group: a mission statement and strategic goals. In two cases, only one landing page was available. These pages included the purpose of the collaborative

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[2] At least two of the final comparison cases indicated in interviews that they were actively exploring expanding their equity focus. This distinction is only meant to capture current public efforts and I recognize that the comparison groups may be working with communities in ways that look different than the constructs defined by this research.

Figure 2. Collaborative Case Studies		
	Equity Cases	**Comparison Cases**
Pairing #1	Bay Area Climate Adaptation Network (BayCAN)	Los Angeles Regional Collaborative (LARC)
Pairing #2	East Central Florida Regional Resilience Collaborative	Capital Area Sustainability Compact
Pairing #3	Resilient Mystic Collaborative	New Hampshire Coastal Adaptation Workgroup [3]

and general priority areas, but slightly less information was collected than for groups with well-developed websites.

The ten documents were then coded using NVivo, a qualitative analysis software, using a detailed coding guide based in both content and process dimensions of equity. This method follows procedures for interpretive content analysis in qualitative research, using a combination of inductive and deductive methods to create my coding guide from both interviews and existing theory (Graneheim, Lindgren, & Lundman, 2017). Content-related themes included six categories of climate impacts, 'co-benefits', 'mitigation', among others. Process-related themes, drawing on the power framework outlined above, included things like 'authority', 'information', 'structure', and 'resources'. [4]

The purpose of this analysis was to reasonably test my hypothesis that including diverse and underrepresented groups would lead to a greater emphasis on equitable climate adaptation and mitigation priorities. It also provided a foundational understanding of each case so that time spent in interviews would be efficient and provide supplementary information. Information gathered from the documents themselves was not analyzed to produce unique findings, but rather compared against interview responses to contextualize and confirm specific claims.

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[3] While the Cambridge Compact was initially selected as the comparison case for the Resilient Mystic Collaborative, several attempts to schedule an interview with the coordinator were unsuccessful so an alternate case was selected. While the New Hampshire Coastal Adaptation Workgroup does not serve as large or urban of a population, its adaptation-focused priority areas – managing sea level rise and coastal hazards – are very similar due to geographic proximity to coastal Massachusetts.

[4] See Appendix B for the complete coding guide.

Interview Recruitment

Between September 2020 and February 2021, I conducted 14 interviews with coordinators and stakeholder groups associated with each selected case study. All of the interviews lasted between 30-75 minutes and followed a semi-structured format conducive to conventional qualitative content analysis (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). For each case, I first identified one or two coordinators for each collaborative group. In three cases, these were the same coordinators interviewed by the Climate Resilience project team. In the others, coordinators were identified via public websites and/or existing professional networks. Coordinators were sent email invitations to schedule phone or video interviews and an interview guide was provided by email prior to each conversation.

For each case study, between two and six stakeholder groups were identified and invited to participate in interviews about the collaborative's work in their area. Based on information from background documents, coordinator interviews, and the Climate Resilience interviews, I was able to identify stakeholder groups operating in the same city or region as each collaborative case study. For the purposes of this research, I selected stakeholder groups that fell into at least one of the following three categories: (1) community-based organizations (CBOs), (2) groups whose missions centered environmental and/or social justice, and (3) small non-profits (defined as being mostly volunteer-run with fewer than five paid staff members).[5] Preference was given to groups serving underrepresented and minoritized communities. In the equity cases, stakeholder interview subjects were active participants in the collaborative. In the comparison cases, these groups were not participants in the collaborative.

For each case study, I made several attempts to contact interview participants. For many of the equity stakeholder groups, an initial interview request was followed up two weeks later with another email. If no response, a call was placed to the organization. While one or two outreach attempts were sufficient for some groups, a few cases required over fifteen outreach attempts to five potential stakeholder organizations before a single interview subject was successfully identified. This was particularly true for non-

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[5] In one case, a stakeholder was suggested by coordinators who did not fit the three criteria outlined in this study. However, due to this person's experience working with predominantly low-income environmental justice communities as a city planner, his interview was included in addition to a non-profit stakeholder group for the same case.

participating stakeholders in the comparison cases. While it is impossible to determine exactly why, the study parameters suggest that these groups have limited staff capacity, a reality which surely has been exacerbated by the economic impacts of Covid-19. It also follows that stakeholder groups in regions where the climate collaborative did not engage diverse constituencies would be likelier to disregard outreach emails due to lack of familiarity with the collaborative group in their area.

Three interview guides were used – one for collaborative coordinators, one for participating stakeholder groups, and one for non-participant stakeholder groups.[6] While each interview guide was tailored to the unique role of each interview subject, the guides generally reflect the three categories outlined in the proposed power framework. The first section for every group asks about the institutional setting and policy context of climate change decision making in their region (institutional and scope-setting power). The second section asks about collaborative process design, including their governance models, scope of work, information sources utilized, funding structures, and decisions about recruitment and membership (scope-setting, informational, and institutional power). For stakeholder groups, this second section focused on why they chose to participate (or not) in the collaborative and in what ways the collaborative's structure supports (or would support) their organizational goals. The third section asks about process dynamics such as facilitation strategies, conflict resolution methods, in-room participation balance, meeting format, and barriers to participation. Non-participating stakeholder groups were not asked the final set of questions. The questions guided interviews through key topics while leaving space for participants to share freely about topics most salient to their experiences. An application for human subjects review was submitted as an addendum to the Climate Resilience project materials and qualified for an exempt determination by the University of Oregon Internal Review Board on September 4, 2020.

Interview Analysis

Prior to analysis, an audio recording of each interview was transcribed in Otter, an online transcription service, and reviewed for accuracy. Each transcript was then uploaded to NVivo and reviewed to identify emergent themes not yet included in the coding guide.

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[6] See Appendix C for complete interview guides.

Using this iterative, inductive coding process, additional codes were added to the initial coding guide and the resulting final guide was used for all subsequent interview analysis. Throughout the coding process, I created informal memos to record major themes, concepts, and questions to explore in later stages of analysis and synthesis. Following the first complete round of coding, I reviewed all text within each code to fix errors, ensure each code matched its description in the coding guide, and memo further about potential findings. Following the coding process, themes within each code was categorized according to the power framework presented above. Key similarities among the equity cases and comparison cases were compiled and then compared with each other to illuminate how each type of power – institutional, scope-setting, and informational – played out within the contexts of participant selection and process design.

Following analysis, I compiled specific tools and strategies associated with creating equitable participatory processes. Specific strategies mentioned by interview subjects, along with my recommendations based on comparing interview data with the power framework, both fed into the end product: a toolkit for collaboration practitioners that outlines facilitation strategies and process design techniques to foster equitable participation within collaborative groups. The resulting toolkit was disseminated to all study participants and broader networks of collaboration practitioners to support equitable processes in similar efforts.

A Note on Positionality

As is common in some qualitative social science research, and has been exemplified in select literature on collaborative natural resource management (Cheng & Randall-Parker, 2017), it is important to acknowledge my unique positionality in the context of this study. Positionality refers to the ways in which a researcher's own motivations, interests, assumptions, identities, and power express themselves in relation to the subject being studied (Cheng & Randall-Parker, 2017). Especially because this project attempts to understand and analyze power, I think it is important to disclose parts of my identity and background that may produce power dynamics or interest-based motivations within this research.

I am a young white woman who was raised in a progressive, upper-middle class suburb in Northern California. I have benefited from significant class and race privilege throughout my life, affording me the luxury of higher education and a consistent financial

safety net. I have spent most of my adult life involved with social and environmental justice non-profits as an organizer and activist. My interest in collaboration stems from a deeply held passion for reimagining governance to meaningfully address the needs of all people. Due to my political beliefs and background as an activist, I carry some bias against certain government institutions and big business. Due to my race and class privilege, I recognize I do not share the day-to-day lived experience of many of the marginalized communities about whom I am writing. To the best of my ability, I strive to continuously learn how to recognize the systems of oppression from which I benefit. I held these factors in mind to the best of my ability as I designed and carried out this research, with the goal of producing work that is both meaningful to me and grounded in the experiences of those with whom I spoke.

IV: FINDINGS

Through analysis of the interviews with collaborative conveners, CBO participants in collaboratives, and CBOs not participating in their local climate collaborative, several themes emerged that illuminate how power dynamics operate in these groups. Findings will be presented using the power framework as a guide – using types of power (Institutional, Scope-Setting, and Informational, each broken into the two dimensions (Participants and Process. Within each section, key findings are discussed in the following order: 1 across equity cases, 2 across comparison cases, and 3 key differences between the equity and comparison cases. Figure 2 depicts some of the themes that were found to be particularly relevant to power and power balancing within each category.

Figure 3. Applied Power Framework		
Power Type	**Dimension #1: Participants**	**Dimension #2: Process**
Institutional	• Stakeholder recruitment • Diversifying co-leadership teams	• Arrangement of committees • Funding models
Scope-Setting & Framing	• Members' missions & strategy • Navigating mistrust	• Inclusivity of agenda-setting • Principled leadership • Facilitation
Informational	• Direct participation by frontline communities	• Technical knowledge • Leaders as information hubs

Institutional Power

Following the power framework, institutional power was identified among participants in the ways groups position themselves in relation to decision making authority through the recruitment of members and co-leaders. Institutional power manifested in process dynamics primarily through governance structures and funding models.

Participants
The Equity Cases

One of the first questions every collaborative must answer is who to include as its members. The equity cases included between 4-11 non-profits, between 21-29 public entities, and between 0-4 private sector actors. All three equity cases reported beginning with more traditional players in climate policy (e.g., local government and agency staff) and only later diversifying the sectors and interests represented. One equity coordinator noted that they initially went for the "clear, obvious people" – defined as engineers, planners, and infrastructure-oriented professionals – and realized that they had inadvertently created a predominantly white collaborative as a result. This practice of recruiting from known networks was repeated throughout nearly every interview, presumably due to the challenge of initiating collaboration when there is no existing relationship of trust and a desire to engage stakeholeders with formal decision making power. However, it also keeps power within the same constituencies and institutions that already hold the most privilege. The equity case coordinators unilaterally discussed recognizing this dynamic and trying to recruit outside their existing spheres, to varying degrees of success.

Intentional recruitment of players with less formal authority was generally accompanied by a recognition that the "people side" of climate change was equally as important to address as more data- and infrastructure-oriented solutions. This shift inspired groups to strategically develop relationships with community groups who represent populations that are disproportionately impacted by climate change. Two equity coordinators mentioned conducting gaps analyses to identify both subject matter expertise and demographic representation that were missing after the initial phase of recruitment. Areas lacking representation were then used to guide further stakeholder outreach. Notably, the one collaborative that used "regional resilience" instead of "climate" in its title included the most extensive list of subject areas (seventeen areas in total, including poverty, water issues, gender, equity, and many others), suggesting that a broader focus on resiliency to climate impacts may result in wider representation than groups focused more on traditional climate policy (i.e. emissions reductions and infrastructure vulnerabilities). Given that every equity case uses language about social resiliency and/or the human impacts of climate change in its mission and goals, these cases were more likely to specifically recruit CBOs with greater access to community knowledge.

Stakeholders in the equity cases also repeatedly mentioned helping conveners think more expansively about recruitment by highlighting disproportionately impacted communities that were not previously considered by equity conveners. For example, two

equity stakeholders in major metropolitan regions noted that people not fluent in English will suffer greater social impacts of climate change due to a lack of of multilingual social service providers and patterns of poverty in immigrant communities. Another equity stakeholder noted that those without internet access are majorly impacted by the intersecting crises brought on by climate disasters. Given their proximity to the communities most impacted, these stakeholder groups can help guide recruitment efforts in a way that redistributes authority further towards the most impacted.

Further, all of the equity case coordinators actively discussed their racial identities and highlighted the importance of assembling co-leadership teams that were diverse in terms of race, gender, and age. All three were initially led by white conveners and quickly pivoted to recruit one or two co-leaders that reflected the demographic characteristics of their local environmental justice communities. Two recruited directly from existing stakeholder members, while the other hired a coordinator already deeply networked with environmental justice groups in the area. Conveners and stakeholders alike emphasized that recruiting diverse stakeholders is insufficient at best, and tokenizing at worst, if leadership teams are comprised of traditionally dominant voices. As one white co-facilitator stated plainly, "It's just like me saying, look, if I'm going to lead this group, I, I'm going to lead it with people of color." Still, this success in diversifying facilitation teams was strongest in the equity-specific subcommittees, and stakeholders in two of the three equity cases were less satisfied with the demographic diversity of coordinators for the full collaborative. The arrangement and implications of subcommittees will be explored more in the following section.

Two coordinators also emphasized that diversifying leadership teams only fostered power-sharing to the extent that they substantially redistributed benefits. For instance, minority staff should receive equal (or more) pay as white staff; responsibilities should be allocated equitably; and leadership duties such as meeting facilitation should also be rotated among members. An imbalance in these subtle differences can lead to diverse leadership teams in which dominant voices still have inherently more influence over collaborative functions.

It was important to some stakeholders to not only recruit more CBOs who work with minority communities, but also to specifically include BIPOC representatives of all member organizations. While no cases discussed currently requesting specific demographic representation from its members, this practice would have significant impact on the racial

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composition of collaboratives. It communicates the importance of not only including organizations that work with diverse communities, but also intentionally working with demographic minorities in every sector. Generally, the equity cases demonstrated a willingness to talk about race, an interest in distributing power to demographic minorities by inviting co-leadership, and an interest in increasing demographic representation at every structural level.

While committed to the idea of inclusion, all three equity coordinators also reported that diversifying is a work in progress. Two out of three stakeholders agreed that these groups still did not adequately represent marginalized voices. Both groups noted that due to the large investment of time needed to join a collaborative, it can be challenging to bring under-resourced stakeholders in during the initial formation stages when the scope and benefits of collaboration are still unclear. Still, every stakeholder group adamantly emphasized that recruiting diverse players must happen early on in a collaborative's formation. Conveners and stakeholders alike were unsure how to demonstrate clear benefits to all stakeholders from the outset, because benefits require time investment and trust-building to generate. Due to this initial investment of time without immediate benefit, some lower-resourced stakeholders may find it challenging to commit when given the option between collaboration and more time-efficient forums. Each case managed this tension – albeit imperfectly – by maintaining a commitment to ongoing recruiting of underrepresented voices as their priorities evolved and they became aware of their groups' strengths and weaknesses.

Through their participation, the equity case CBOs' gained access to institutional power not only be increasing proximity to decision makers within the collaborative, but also by increasing their access to authority outside the collaborative. All three reported adding value to their work by teaming up on high-demand tasks like data collection and analysis, thereby making their work more efficient with limited resources. When resources are limited, CBOs repeated how valuable it was to reduce duplication of efforts in the non-profit community and multiply the impacts of work they were already doing. Opportunities to network with local and state governments also resulted in CBO stakeholders being recruited for higher-profile projects, invited to speak at more events, and getting approached by new funders interested in supporting their work. The power of networking is a key benefit that increases' CBOs' proximity to power, formal decision-making authority, and resources.

While a common assumption driving recruitment is that potential stakeholder members should both contribute something unique to the collaborative and derive benefits in return, one equity case stakeholder suggested modifying this expectation for non-profits. Interestingly, two of the three CBOs were relatively new to learning about climate change and saw their participation in the collaborative as a way to quickly grow their capacity for climate work. They saw climate planning as fully aligned with their organizational missions but had underdeveloped programs in that area of work. One also emphasized the value of training their staff received through the collaborative. This suggests that collaboratives can not only serve as a platform for groups to advocate their existing interests, but also as a way to build capacity for local community-based climate work. In order to increase CBO involvement, the group should place higher value on CBOs getting something out of their participation rather than immediately expecting co-benefits.

The Comparison Cases

Turning now to the comparison cases, distinct themes emerged related to participants' access to authority and resources. The comparison cases included between 0-7 non-profits; between 6-18 public entities; and between 2-6 private sector actors. These conveners also reported recruiting from within their existing networks at first, but did not eventually pivot to reach outside those spheres. One convener noted that in collaboratives primarily focused on policy changes and emissions targets, there is a strong tendency to begin recruiting from actors with the most political power and/or largest environmental impacts first. In the comparison cases, this tendency was evident in how large municipal governments and high-emitting institutions were often seen as the most crucial players to recruit. This tendency has the effect of replicating existing hierarchies of power in which institutional actors reinforce their power and traditionally marginalized groups remain excluded.

When collaboratives emerge from existing networks, it can also be easy to forego deliberate recruitment altogether. One comparison convener noted that as the collaborative's reputation grew, new participants consistently contacted staff asking to join. Due to this persistent influx of new interest, coordinators never felt the need to prioritize formal recruitment. Only in the last year as members of that group have become more interested in equity have there been conversations about intentionally recruiting from underserved populations and social service departments like housing and public health. As

one coordinator reflected, there is a big difference between simply not excluding people and intentionally including them. Notably, all of the comparison coordinators also spoke openly about their racial identities as white people, but most felt they had recognized the challenges of homogenous leadership too late for the collaborative to meaningfully increase its representation.

Non-participating stakeholders confirmed that in in the comparison cases, recruitment (or lack thereof) became a method for gatekeeping communities' access to institutional power. One organization that engages in policy advocacy at the state level noted that participation in the collaborative would have helped them more efficiently track legislation related to climate change, a topic area they have less capacity to work on due to their parallel work on housing affordability and tenants' rights. Another non-participating stakeholder was told directly that they could not participate in the collaborative because it was a place for major institutions and the private sector to simply "learn from each other." While it is unrealistic to assume that every venue can or should include every voice, it is critical to recognize that when high-power institutions collaborative for the purpose of learning about climate change from each other, they will learn about the issue from the perspective of those perpetuating it, rather than from the people most impacted by it.

Another way comparison cases prevented CBOs from accessing real authority is by setting unclear expectations for their participation. Interviews with two of the three conveners reported tensions when elected officials and government staff held unspoken assumptions about what kinds of groups should be involved without a clear path for how they should participate. In one group, a non-profit partner was selected to participate because local elected officials who put up initial funding thought it was necessary to have a community partner present at the table. However, there was no plan for how that organization would represent the communities' interests, a tension exacerbated by the fact that they were the sole non-profit partner at the table and served communities with highly divergent preferences for climate action. Partially as a result of unclear benefits and expectations for representation, the partnership eventually dissolved.

Comparing the Case Groups

Across the two case groups, the six cases had highly variable ratios of stakeholders from the public, civil, and private sectors (see figure 4). The equity cases had overall higher rates of participation from non-profit and public sector members, and slightly lower rates

from the private sector, relative to the comparison cases. Interestingly, the equity groups also publicized information at a higher rate than comparison cases about their membership structure, explanation of member benefits, and/or an interest form for parties who are interested in joining. While impossible to draw correlation due to the small sample size, this finding suggests that collaboratives with more publicly available information may have an easier time identifying new members, and therefor expanding the diversity of their membership.

Figure 4. Stakeholder Composition of the Case Groups			
	Public Sector Stakeholders	**Civic Sector Stakeholders**	**Private Sector Stakeholders**
Equity Cases	21-29	4-11	0-4
Comparison Cases	6-18	0-7	2-6

The two case groups had notable differences in the way they recruited members. The power framework suggests that institutional power manifests through the socioeconomic status, class background, educational attainment, perceived wealth, organizational status, and decision-making authorities considered valuable in collaborative spaces. Recruitment is central to cultivating partnerships that redistribute power from existing authorities, dominant identity groups, and high-status stakeholders. However, presumably due to the high level of trust needed for stakeholders to embark on shared work together, conveners in every case began recruiting from within their existing trusted networks. When conveners were already networked with powerful players, this recruitment method catered to privileged groups. The main difference between case groups was that equity conveners pivoted earlier to recruiting marginalized and climate-impacted communities. As one non-participating stakeholder suggested, "I think that there's a real need for these collaborations to really not just like, publicize, that they're happening and try to find some members but to really go into the community and meet people where they're at and say, you have a lived experience that we want to include here." While comparison cases were likelier to recruit partners with formal policymaking authority or access to large-scale research capacity, equity cases resolved to build relationships with community partners through targeted outreach and diverse leadership teams.

Further, stakeholders noted that creating diverse leadership structures required active advocacy by members and humility on the part of existing leaders to step back when appropriate. While the equity cases had widespread support for diversification, the comparison case coordinators generally lacked support – and in one case, even faced pushback – to doing so. The nature of this pushback was unclear, but these findings suggest that diversifying both membership and leadership structures requires a degree of comfort discussing race and demographic characteristics, along with a shared commitment to recruiting minority groups.

Process

The cases varied in their capacity to engage CBO partners due to several process design choices. While a full exploration of collaborative structures is beyond the scope of this paper, two key process components were identified as having particular relevance to power and equity in participation: the arrangement of committees and funding mechanisms.

The Equity Cases

Due to the large memberships and broad scope of work many collaboratives take on, it is common practice to organize subcommittees or working groups that tackle particular projects or subject areas. All three equity cases include separate tables that work specifically on issues of equity and social vulnerability in climate change planning. Across the board, equity conveners and stakeholders saw their equity tables as a valuable tool for engaging underrepresented groups and making equity a bigger priority in the collaborative's overall work. Equity tables sometimes worked on their own projects and sometimes supported the collaborative at large (e.g., creating a guide for equitable adaptation planning). In all three cases, equity tables included a much higher percentage of CBOs than the overall collaborative membership did, and new non-governmental stakeholders were often recruited to equity tables before they joined the collaborative as full members. In all three equity cases, the equity table served as a place for stakeholders to incubate ideas, share comfortably with peers, and create materials to bring to the larger group. Most were not confident that the full collaborative group would focus on equity to the same extent if there were not a separate space to discuss the community impacts of climate change. One convener commented, "And we're doing more and more with equity

with the larger group. Because as, as this as this issue has come much more to the forefront pushed by various organizations or CBOs and all, our members are doing a lot more themselves and want to do a lot more."

Most CBO stakeholders reported higher levels of satisfaction and comfort participating in the equity tables than the main tables. Every stakeholder organization focused on multiple complex social issues – ranging from housing affordability, immigration, farmworker justice, tenants' rights, and others – and reported having less background in climate change planning than other collaborative members from traditional environmental fields. They appreciated having separate space not only to focus on their subject matter expertise, but also to comfortably share and learn alongside like-minded organizations who were less mired in the technical climate change jargon common within the main table. As one group noted about the equity work group, "Usually, if there's more like CBOs involved, they're a little bit more aware…of including community. So it's, it's never been like a disagreement…So it's a different mindset. And I know, like in the interactions I've had, they're more appreciative of it." Further, BIPOC stakeholders in two of the three equity cases reported feeling more comfortable due to the demographic diversity of the subcommittees' leadership teams. The practice of creating equity subcommittees – especially if they are predominantly spaces for BIPOC members – aligns with the concept of affinity spaces highlighted in the discussion of tools for equitable participation. The popularity of these groups among BIPOC stakeholders suggests that equity tables were a key factor in engaging CBOs, creating a hub for equity work, and developing an equity focus throughout the collaborative at large. Still, stakeholders in these cases reported having varying amounts of influence over the overall collaborative's direction, a nuance that will be explored further in the section on scope-setting power.

One convener added that a benefit of using the working group model for their equity focus was that it gave the group nimbleness to change direction much more quickly than the larger table could. This allowed for a greater responsiveness to the changing needs of CBO partners, including periodically reevaluating the working group model entirely to ensure it was still meeting members' needs. A stakeholder pointed out that this flexibility is particularly important for including non-profit partners who are often operating on short-term grant cycles and need to ensure their participation aligns with funders' goals.

Some of the equity cases included CBO stakeholders as full collaborative members, while others were involved in a more advisory capacity. In an advisory capacity, equity

tables could act as a check on both the process and substance of the collaborative's work – ensuring the group uses equitable practices with its members and in its projects. The advisory model was particularly useful for collaboratives whose mission dictated a narrow subset of primary participants (e.g. local governments). Although, conveners and stakeholders in the advisory model expressed frustration that a structural decision to focus primarily on government partners created a glass ceiling for CBO participants to fully integrate as equal members. Lack of clarity about involving CBOs in an advisory capacity resulted in confusion about the benefits CBOs could expect to receive from their participation. If they acted as advisors to local government staff who were directly responsible for climate adaptation projects, for example, this model seemed to serve CBO interests moderately well. If CBOs could only inform fellow collaborative members about their communities' concerns, rather than collaborate on proiritzation and implementation of policy and project goals, they described feeling uncertain about whether the advisory model afforded them real power over planning and policymaking. Whether CBOs were engaged as full or advisory members, everyone emphasized the importance of transparency about governance models so that stakeholders could realistically assess whether their participation was worthwhile.

Some groups recognized the challenge in effectively linking the equity tables with the collaborative at large, beyond simply sharing updates in large group meetings. One group was considering formally institutionalizing partnerships between the two tables by having local governments identify CBO partners in their own communities and inviting them to join the equity work group meetings – creating a one-to-one ratio of municipalities and community partners. This strategy has not yet been realized but demonstrates coordinators' creative thinking about how to use side tables as a venue for supporting mutually beneficial relationships both within and outside formal collaborative structures. This kind of arrangement could go a long way towards transferring ownership to community groups in broader planning conversations.

Funding is another area where institutional power flows through process design. A perennial problem in multi-sector collaborative efforts is the discrepancy between members who are paid by their employers to participate and other who are either volunteers or required to do extra fundraising to fund time spent on collaborative efforts. While most of the equity cases funded their work through local foundations and/or sponsoring government entities, one equity case actually paid CBO partners to sit at the

table. While the collaborative is funded by membership fees from municipalities, CBOs' membership fees are waived and staff are offered stipends to cover their time. Still, the conveners in this group noted that some CBOs don't take full advantage of this benefit – presumably because the low rate and/or high transaction cost mean it cannot overcome the challenge of limited staff time. The stakeholder organization appreciated the stipend but noted that since joining the collaborative, their climate work had grown so significantly that they needed to do additional fundraising to hire a new staff member. This was an exciting development that aligned with their strategic goals as an organization, but it also raises the question of whether stipends are sufficient when existing staff members are stretched so thin. Conveners also wished they had publicized the stipend system earlier in their group's formation, noting that this might have helped attract CBOs that otherwise would not consider participating. Providing stipends for under-resourced and non-profit members is a critical step towards balancing resource power in these groups, although it cannot eliminate disparities in staff capacity altogether.

Increased access to funding networks was another important benefit highlighted by CBOs. At least two equity group stakeholders discussed the benefits of collaborative staff's capacity – including grant-writing skills, personal networks, and regional reputation – to help channel funds into local projects that supported their missions. These benefits appear to be a significant advantage for stakeholder groups with fewer financial resources. One coordinator even reported using the collaborative as a platform to investigate how long-term resiliency efforts were being funded by grant-making institutions in their region. In this way, the collaborative acted as a venue for addressing regional funding patterns that created systemic challenges for durable partnerships between the public and NGO sectors. Because resource-based power is embedded in institutional patterns that are not necessarily responsive to local needs, this convener's service highlights broad potential for using collaborative capacity to influence how funding is distributed on a regional scale.

Funding priorities also signaled collaborative values about whose expertise was considered important. Providing stipends for CBOs to participate sends a clear message that community expertise is valuable in climate change planning. One convener noted that paying for community-based knowledge at the same rate as a technical expert models an atmosphere of shared power and mutual benefit. While not articulated in these same terms by the CBO in this case, that group did discuss the importance of stable funding mechanisms to build their quickly growing climate work. Further, it was important in most equity cases

to hire co-leaders as paid staff members – further transferring resource power through collaborative staffing models. Stipending CBO participation also set an example that has spurred local government members of that group to fund community-based partners in their own adaptation projects outside the collaborative.

The Comparison Cases

The comparison cases were more homogenous in their governance models and funding structures. Every comparison case also utilized subgroups to some extent, but not for the purpose of increasing capacity for equitable planning. All three included predominantly public and private sector members, with a large focus on technical and research capacity for addressing climate change and sustainability issues. Their membership models had overall less flexibility to include community-based partners who were not already proficient and/or not interested in technocratic environmental solutions.

Most non-participating stakeholders mentioned that when joining any collaborative endeavor that requires significant staff time, they first needed to ensure they had grant funding. One noted, "if you're a small organization, every single moment, you're trying to kind of figure out where you can best have the biggest impact. And so they have to have better funding back for all the smaller organizations is, I think, just kind of what it comes down to." While none of the three comparison cases charged membership dues, and some stakeholders said they would have happily participated even if funding was not made available, the assumption that precariously funded community groups could participate on a volunteer basis deserves critical examination.

Comparing the Case Groups

While all cases utilized a subcommittee structure to divide work into subject areas, the equity cases used this model to create affinity tables for work specific to equitable climate planning. Some CBOs spoke about these tables as having a markedly different culture than the main tables. For example, members were likelier to understand the lived experience of frontline communities, more interested in developing a fully decentralized leadership structures (e.g., rotating facilitation roles), and felt more confident that they had shared terminology to discuss complex race and equity issues. The benefits CBOs derived from these cultural differences suggests that in the comparison cases where no similar participation option was offered, CBO stakeholders might have felt either forced to

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assimilate to dominant cultural norms or forego participation altogether. While two non-participating stakeholders did say that they would have been interested in joining if they'd been asked, it is illustrative that they primarily chose to participate in highly grassroots climate coalitions that were less populated by traditional environmental professionals.

Of the six cases, only one was funded through membership fees and five were funded through a combination of grants and sponsorship from member organizations. Other than one equity case offering subsidized memberships to CBO partners, there were few discernable trends differentiating the equity groups' funding mechanisms from the comparison groups. While several coordinators noted the benefits of charging membership fees – namely, resilience to funding instability and a higher degree of commitment from participating groups – requiring fees for membership can also create barriers to participation for groups with less access to resources. The grant-funded equity cases were also likelier to have funders with institutional commitments to equity. In most of the comparison cases, funding entities were foundations interested in largescale technological fixes to climate or politically centrist governments interested in sustainable practices. Collaboratives that were interested in pursuing equitable work benefitted considerably from identifying funders who valued addressing the social vulnerabilities associated with climate change.

Finally, the processes by which groups decided on these organizing structures varied significantly. Across case groups, most conveners had some prior experience working with or learning about existing collaborative efforts, and staff frequently reported replicating other groups' governance models when designing their structure. Two out of three comparison groups were formed in part to model other existing collaboratives. While multiple coordinators in both case groups said they solicited feedback from their members about group structures, it is evident that these structures are often created by collaborative conveners and relatively fixed once stakeholders decide to join. The difficulty of changing structures after they are established illustrates the importance of thoughtfully designing inclusive systems as early as possible in a collaborative's formation.

Scope-Setting Power

Climate collaboratives' scope of work varies from information sharing to joint policy advocacy, encompassing both adaptation and mitigation priorities. The following findings focus on the process of determining a scope of work, a process which inevitably involves

framing climate change through a particular set of values and priorities. Embedded in groups' priorities are constructions about what climate change is, who it affects, how to address it, and preferable timescales for action. It has been established that participants, leadership teams, and decision-making processes shape the scope of work collaboratives decide to embark on together.

Participants

The Equity Cases

The members of any collaborative group profoundly shape its culture, mission, goals, and projects. The cases' processes for setting agendas and framing issues depended largely on which participants had a seat at the table and the nature of past relationships between those stakeholder groups. The three equity cases included relatively high rates of NGO partners whose primary focus was environmental and/or social justice. All three equity cases' mission statements also mentioned social vulnerability, equity, or other human impacts of climate change. While it is impossible to conclude which came first – the collaboratives' equity framing or the inclusion of community groups – CBOs reported shaping collaboratives' work significantly simply by being at the table.

Groups' initial motivations to collaborate often significantly influenced whether they adopted an equity focus and which community groups joined. In one example, an equity case convener reported that their collaborative launched to build economic resiliency in response to a wave of immigration exacerbated by extreme weather in a neighboring region. Their clear connection between immigration, strain on social services, and weather patterns cemented an approach that valued social dynamics as much as climatic events. In the other two, CBO participants were based in low-income communities of color that will be severely impacted by sea level rise. These organizations' programs focus on climate resiliency for high-vulnerability populations through capacity building for environmental justice leaders, green infrastructure to reduce flooding impacts, and deep community engagement. All three equity collaboratives focused at least slightly more on climate adaptation than climate mitigation (reduction of greenhouse gas emissions). While one CBO partner's website mentions campaigns related to energy efficiency and utility advocacy, these partnerships seemed to form more to reduce risks and vulnerabilities in specific communities.

Interestingly, all three of the equity cases were also designed to focus primarily on supporting local municipalities. While one was slightly less explicit about this focus, two were very clear from the outset about designing the collaborative around the needs of local government staff and then recruiting non-municipal partners to support that work. Equity case stakeholders all mentioned that a benefit of collaborating was building trust and working closely with local government partners for the purpose of identifying common goals and agendas. One specifically mentioned that a key benefit of having more CBOs involved is the possibility for local governments and justice-based non-profits to develop deeper understanding and resolve conflicts on contentious issues in a more comfortable space. This is a key finding that illustrates the potential for collaboratives to serve as platforms for conflict resolution and relationship-building. With conflicts over local climate action being widespread, collaboratives may offer a space for communities to effectively funnel grassroots energy into municipal action, and for municipalities to authentically build trust with these groups.

One convener of the group whose mission reads "by and for local governments," however, has since questioned the inclusivity of that phrasing. The group's scope of work has consistently prioritized government staff, but this convener suggested it might be more equitable to also explicitly acknowledge the communities local governments serve in its mission statement. The way groups explicitly or implicitly identify who their work is meant to serve can have bearing over who feels most included and valued; in this case, CBOs were – by definition – not intended to be the primary beneficiaries of the collaborative's work. Moreover, most equity case conveners mentioned that small tweaks in who represented each member organization – for example, a municipal planner versus a public health director – can dramatically shape how climate issues are framed and how familiar staff are with on-the-ground community experiences. While there is often incentive to design collaboration for the highest-impact policy players, these findings suggest the importance of also considering members' direct knowledge of community experience.

Equity case stakeholder groups unilaterally emphasized that it is critical for underrepresented voices to be included from the beginning. While every equity case discussed reevaluating short- and medium-term goals on a regular basis, which helped them remain flexible to new members' concerns and interests, often foundational work establishing a collaborative's identity and mission is set at the beginning. Once these foundational directions were determined, it was challenging for many groups to

substantially alter their structures and goals. Every CBO emphasized how crucial it is to be engaged early in the process. Joining the table after the initial formation process may prevent community groups from helping establish these foundational goals, norms, and values. Further, these initial frames were consequential in determining future stakeholder recruitment. Practicing inclusion from the outset is an important antidote to the pattern many CBOs experience of being consulted by government actors too late in the game to have any significant influence over outcomes.

Some conveners used stakeholder interviewing to collect information from a wide range of diverse actors even before convening the collaboratives' first formal meeting. One equity convener recalled that when beginning to define economic resiliency in their region, they reached out to a farmworker justice organization to better understand the language they used to talk about worker vulnerability in hotter weather. While this group was ultimately unable to join the collaborative because its members feared public partnerships with government entities, the language they used to frame economic resiliency was reflected in the collaborative's memorandum of understanding. This use of stakeholder interviewing helped the group collaboratively frame climate issues with some of the most vulnerable residents in their region, even despite challenges to include them as full members. Especially in cases where groups lack formal citizenship rights and may fear legal ramifications for involving themselves publicly in policy debates, this is a critical strategy for conveners to balance scope-setting power.

Comparison case summary

In many regional contexts, relationships between stakeholders – particularly government actors and community groups – have been affected by previous disagreements and sometimes hostility. Most of the comparison cases reported historic or existing distrust, and even disdain, between activist CBOs and local government players. One convener reflected on bureaucrats' fear of saying something stupid and losing their job, and reticence to trust groups who have historically made them a target. In one case where local advocacy groups had run hardline renewable energy campaigns for years, this tension prevented a large actor in the area – a utility who had been the target of their campaigns – from ever feeling comfortable joining the collaborative. This led conveners to recruit only the least adversarial community group to participate in the collaborative, not extending invitations to any other NGOs. In another comparison case, distrust ran so deep that conveners said the

collaborative would have fallen apart immediately if activists showed up at meetings. Staff, in their view, would be wholly unwilling to join a collaborative where there were "a bunch of people barking at them." Instead, they wanted a "safe place" for exchange and collaboration where they could speak openly without fear of retribution against themselves personally or the public officials for whom they work. This group devised a creative solution to give advocates updates on the collaboratives' progress to avoid perceptions that they were dealing behind closed doors. This act of transparency effectively quelled active resistance but still did nothing to foster better collaborative communication between opposing groups.

Some of this distrust is linked to a foundational difference in stakeholders' strategic approaches to inciting change. Particularly among the comparison cases, there was widespread tension between government and non-profit actors about whether to use an adversarial or non-adversarial tone. Advocates who rely on a power-building model use strategic targets – often governments and other powerful institutions – to amass public support through constructing a "good guy"/"bad guy" narrative. This appeared more common for groups pushing for policy changes than those with a greater focus on adapting to climate change. However, in cases where historic distrust was entrenched, even considering the possibility of collaboration was a non-starter for some stakeholders, regardless of action priorities. While it is understandable that groups whose approach to policy advocacy is purely adversarial would have more success in non-collaborative venues, relying on entrenched assumptions based on past relationships hindered collaboratives' potential to begin building new bridges in adaptation-oriented areas where both parties may indeed benefit from collaboration.

Conversely, many coordinators noted the need to act as inspirational figures to secure stakeholders' buy-in. They described the key to their recruitment efforts was approaching each stakeholder by highlighting what they were already doing well and simply offering a venue to amplify those efforts. This went hand in hand with convincing large institutions in town to join by repeatedly emphasizing a "middle of the road" path that would not require them to change their behavior. While effective for building collaborative trust among these high-power stakeholders, this approach plainly excluded groups whose missions depended on changing the status quo.

Comparing the Case Groups

In comparing the equity and comparison cases, stakeholder groups' identity and reputations significantly shaped how and to what extent they could access agenda-setting power. While most of the complexity in scope-setting lies in process dynamics, the kinds of participants who feel included in agenda-setting has significant bearing on outcomes. In the equity cases, there was a greater value placed on recruiting groups with differences so that they could use the collaborative as a venue for working through conflict and improving relationships between communities and government. In the comparison cases – with one notable exception that mentioned considerable conflict resolution efforts – there was a stronger tendency to recruit players who were amenable to a "middle of the road" path that secured buy-in from large institutions at the expense of including local advocates.

Process

Collaboratives often spend a considerable amount of time setting the scope of their work immediately after launching, but most continue to refine, reevaluate, and shift priorities to ensure they are meeting member organizations' needs as they change. Conveners unilaterally reported engaging their members in defining collaboratives' scopes of work, but the ways in which stakeholders reported influencing agenda-setting and issue framing varied significantly.

The Equity Cases

The equity cases reported an overall high level of inclusion of community groups in their scope-setting conversations. With the caveat mentioned above – that most equity cases did not diversify considerably until after their earliest formation conversations – they shared a commitment to including all of their members in direction-setting conversations once they joined. In all the equity cases, conveners and founding members decided early on to emphasize not only the technical aspects of climate change, but also the specific social vulnerabilities and equity concerns associated with regional climate impacts. While one group was reticent about joining due to their group's lack of familiarity with environmental topics, they quickly realized the importance of them sitting at the table. They commented, "I was reluctant, like, what will we have to offer, what's, what [has] our voice got, what I realized is, is that it is a lot easier to talk about buildings and solar panels and bridges and roads, than it is to talk about people." Another mentioned that they were better able to engage in work at the intersection of the Covid-19 pandemic and climate stressors because

the collaborative served as a unique hub where 'cross pollination' between groups working on health, equity, food issues, and climate was possible. As mentioned in previous sections, collaboratives that included groups without traditional environmental backgrounds were likelier to frame climate change broadly and likelier to increase capacity for climate justice work among CBOs who had not previously been involved.

The role of facilitation was critically important in stakeholders feeling like they could influence agenda-setting conversations. Equity conveners thought of their primary purpose as group facilitators – to help build collaborative capacity and ensure that collective work supported members' missions. Facilitators in the equity groups, and particularly in equity side tables, held some subject matter expertise related to climate change planning, but talked more about supporting group processes than dictating content. Most of the equity conveners were unaffiliated with any particular stakeholder group, with the exception of equity subcommittee co-leaders. Surprisingly, only one group used professional facilitators from an established organization of third-party neutrals. CBOs in every case discussed their admiration and personal relationships with these facilitators, repeating that they felt comfortable in group meetings to share things that they would not necessarily share in other forums because they perceived the space to be safe and inclusive. The frequency and strength of these claims demonstrates that facilitators have a lot of personal influence over whether marginalized groups feel comfortable to participate fully or not.

Coordinators[7] in all three equity cases were also instrumental in setting equity as a priority in their groups. While most strove to make big decisions collectively, several coordinators reflected on just how many elements of collaboratives' success rely on the personal influence of coordinating teams. Two out of the three equity cases explicitly acknowledged that their equity focus was born out of leaders' personal interest before finding general support within their membership. Centering equity as "just the way we do things" helped give their members permission to prioritize an equity lens in their own organizations. While somewhat contradictory to other findings about facilitators' lack of personal investment in group outcomes, it confirms a nuance explored in 'activist

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[7] Most facilitators served in several administrative and leadership capacities, and, will be referred to as 'coordinators' or 'facilitators' somewhat interchangeably.

mediation' theory on intentionally framing group processes to benefit lower-power stakeholders. Facilitators who step beyond 'neutrality' to center the needs of particular groups can still effectively guide collaboratives through highly participatory processes that speak to the needs of many actors. They also have a unique ability set the tone for collaborative work that can "rub off" on collaborative members – in this case, by catalyzing equity work as a baseline standard.

Coordinators also emphasized that engaging in climate planning with an equity lens requires significant research, learning, and internal work. When they modeled this learning process, it gave members permission to embark on their own learning processes, however messy and uncomfortable they may be. CBOs supported this learning process by encouraging other members to learn terminology related to equitable planning and do their own internal organizational work. As one stakeholder put it, "Everybody wants to do the right thing, except that what they don't want to do is look inward at themselves…And what that means is, before we go out and try to get our community to be equitable, or you know, what's happening organizationally, who's on leadership? Who's on our board? What kind of equity policies do we have in place?" CBOs in two cases talked about the importance of establishing clear and specific definitions of terms like equity and resilience. In one case, CBOs co-produced a glossary to guide the rest of the collaborative's work and ensure people were using these common words in comparable ways. Asking questions, doing the research, codifying language, and looking internally were key strategies employed by the equity groups.

Even while the equity cases were generally more inclusive of social impacts in their agenda-setting stages, the equity stakeholders discussed continuously pushing for more focus on the "social realm" of climate vulnerability. For example, even in a case where the stakeholder interviewed thought the collaborative was very inclusive of community groups and generally interested in centering the needs of low-income communities, they mentioned slight disappointment that a recent project to map infrastructure resilience included so many more engineers, emergency managers, and technical experts than those who are more knowledgeable about the social impacts of vulnerability. CBOs still wished there were more time and resources spent on social vulnerability expertise. This suggests that while the equity cases were making progress on incorporating social themes, they still relied predominantly on climate change frames which center built environments over social impacts.

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CBO stakeholders also expressed some frustration about the speed and scale of solutions the collaborative was able to address. One expressed this about the general state of climate planning in their locality: "It's a shame, I guess, you can say, because we're the ones that are literally living like day to day like trying to figure out how we're gonna deal with gentrification or housing, affordability, food insecurity, immigration issues, mental health issues. And so some, unfortunately, sometimes some projects aren't really built are designed to have a long term, a long term solutions for communities like ours." Two equity conveners reflected on the complex tradeoffs related to speed. In reflecting on the challenges to engage the "grittier" justice-oriented groups, one noted, "we go slow together, there's nothing fast about it." This slow, incremental change is common in collaboratives and may or may not create space for non-profit partners to operate at the pace and scale that their missions require.

Finally, the three equity groups reported varying levels of success with translating the equity focus in subcommittees to the full collaborative's scope. One has successfully transferred the equity lens to their main table by slowly spending more and more time on it in the main group. Their coordinator discussed feeling unsure about pushing that focus at the outset, but has since found strong support within the group – "It's because our people have asked for it, you know, and it's not just the folks that go to the equity workgroup meetings." One has had strong support from members to prioritize social vulnerabilities from its inception. A third equity case has had strong success in its side table, but stakeholders report not much success in cultivating an equity focus outside that working group. It was unclear what process dynamics caused this disconnect. The degree to which equity groups are able to influence the collaborative's core work – rather than simply doing side projects while the main group maintains a focus on technocratic climate planning – says volumes about who holds scope-setting power.

The Comparison Cases

Two of the three comparison cases were initially created to fill gaps in local climate modeling and vulnerability assessments, and the third was built to address internal sustainability practices within governments. While conveners noted increasingly focusing on human impacts in vulnerability assessments, these topic areas lend themselves to highly technical information which took precedent over community impacts. One convener reflected on their group's lack of a strong "value proposition" to keep groups at the table,

leading to a fairly narrow scope for collaboration that catered primarily to data-driven large academic institutions and big cities. In one instance, a comparison case coordinator recalled that nearly 100 stakeholders – including many local CBOs – attended an initial kickoff meeting for the collaborative but quickly dropped out due to the highly technocratic tone of initial framing discussions.

Related to the mistrusting relationships described previously, most of the comparison cases reported misaligned strategy frames that led to frustration among members in their scope-setting stages. In one, the members of an advocacy-oriented CBO wanted the collaborative to drive local renewable energy policy, but local government members were primarily staff who felt they had little control over the elected officials capable of making those decisions. Community groups were interested in delivering widespread benefits to meet emissions reductions targets whereas staff saw the most benefit in sharing internal sustainability practices. This tension between policy making and staff-level information sharing was mentioned in several cases as a key point of tension in negotiating benefits between community groups and other members.

Contrary to the way equity conveners thought of their role as facilitators, two of the comparison cases experienced problems when stakeholders took on facilitation responsibilities without a collective understanding of what the role entailed. In both cases, the stakeholder organizations had very specific interests and particular methodologies that did not align with other members' priorities. Given their role, however, they held outsized influence over the collaborative's goals. While the reasons for choosing these stakeholder leaders were similar – they had access to particular resources and/or lent notoriety to the group – the conflicting mandates of both serving organizational interests *and* facilitating participatory decisions led to disfunction.

Stakeholder facilitators also brought the culture of their organization or sector to the forefront of the collaborative's work in ways that were sometimes counterproductive. In one case where the facilitator worked for a highly hierarchical institution, the group took on a more authoritarian atmosphere that hindered meaningful collaboration. In another case, the facilitating agent held different assumptions than other members about how actively meetings should be managed. Using words like 'facilitator', 'administrator', and 'meeting organizer' interchangeably led to confusion about whether it was appropriate for facilitators to take a hands-on approach to helping parties resolve conflict and manage decisions, rather than simply take notes and help schedule meetings. In the eyes of

coordinators in both of these comparison cases, these types of misunderstandings led to mistrust and eventually contributed to member attrition.

Comparing the Case Groups

As is evident in the review of framing and scope-setting power, the more groups engaged in environmental justice there were in a collaborative, the more likely that group was to engage social vulnerability and equity as a primary goal. Including diverse constituencies early in the process was critical for meaningfully democratizing scope-setting conversations. In the words of one non-participating stakeholder, "the more that we include a broader range of people at the outset so that we actually design the processes together, not just survey them and try to produce report, the better it's going to be better outcome is going to be I think, the more people are going to feel that they're being heard."

In nearly all of the six case studies, coordinators considered their most important role to be group facilitators. Most of the equity case leadership teams were led by third party facilitators alongside CBO stakeholder/facilitators who co-lead the equity subcommittees. All of the comparison cases were facilitated by stakeholder groups, and most reported either lack of clarity about their role or significant influence over facilitation by particular interests. It is worth noting that the equity case leaders also exerted significant influence over framing conversations, but to the benefit of marginalized stakeholders. This points to the value of not making universal claims about how collaboratives should be run (e.g. neutral third-parties who don't exert personal influence), but of assessing who those influences benefit. In the comparison cases, stakeholder facilitation benefitted researchers at prestigious universities and engineering teams within large cities. In the equity cases, those decisions benefited low-income communities and communities of color. Groups should consider the power of facilitators to frame agendas in ways that replicate status quo power imbalances or redistribute power to marginalized groups. Framing issues to intentionally empower these voices can coexist with any collaborative agenda – whether it be gathering data, sharing information, developing policy, or implementing projects.

The words collaboratives use to define their work and bring parties to the table have considerable consequences on the kinds of work they are later able to accomplish. A few cases spread across the two groups discussed the challenge of selecting names for their collaboratives. For example, one equity case chose the "economic resiliency" frame to avoid

political polarization of "climate change" language, but some stakeholder groups were unwilling to join because they equated resilience with sea level rise and considered it outside their scope of work. A comparison case that used "sustainability" as their main frame found that this word preemptively excluded community groups who were specifically committed to emissions reductions goals. Casting a wide net with a name – while still being honest about the group's potential capabilities (e.g., not promising emissions reductions policy without policymakers in the room) – can help ensure the adaptability of group priorities into the future. Further, collaboratives should be mindful of how certain names and words will be interpreted by stakeholders they hope to engage. Community stakeholders who are best positioned to address the social and economic ramifications of climate impacts may not consider their work as relevant if presented with traditional environmentalist buzz words.

Another tension that ran through many interviews in both case groups was the speed at which stakeholders insisted climate mitigation and adaptation should happen. Interviewees with technical backgrounds tended to emphasize the rapidly closing deadlines for making progress on climate action. One noted that while they agree with the principles of inclusive planning, they felt uncomfortable speaking openly about whether the time it takes to democratize decision making is worth further delays in tangible adaptation and mitigation efforts. Conversely, many coordinators discussed the difficulty of balancing expectations between activist groups who demanded tight timelines for bold policy changes the slower pace of bureaucrat participants. Community-based groups similarly emphasized the sometimes slow process of democratizing decision-making with adequate community participation. The tension about the speed of climate planning is widespread in climate justice conversations and emerged repeatedly as a theme throughout interviews. Interestingly, more than anything the interviewees discussed a desire to talk openly about this tension with fellow collaborative members. Because there are significant environmental justice benefits to both fast action (i.e., fewer climate impacts and/or more preparedness) *and* action that is not rushed (i.e., ensuring a wide spectrum of community voices are heard), collaboratives could serve as a unique platform to discuss these complex tradeoffs openly.

Informational Power

Planning for climate change requires a great deal of information, and many climate collaboratives have launched for the purpose of filling gaps in local climate data (R. Margerum, Adams, Thomas, & Renirie, 2020). Two common examples are groups forming to create downscaled climate projections or to collectively fund a greenhouse gas inventory. Typically, stakeholders representing academic and research institutions have been key drivers of collaboratives' success and provided important benefits to municipalities and community groups who have less access to complex technical data.

The information most valued and utilized by collaborative groups also helps illuminate assumptions about who that work serves and where power is located. Following the power framework, exclusively relying on technical and scientific information – at the expense of lived experience, storytelling, and alternate forms of knowledge production – can be a barrier to groups with diverse ontological perspectives and modes of expression. Informational power expressed itself through the way participants' involved communities directly in their work; the extent to which they acted as conduits for community knowledge to reach decision makers; and how they utilized scientific and technical data.

Participants

The Equity Cases

Every equity case utilized technical and scientific information, but they were likelier than the comparison groups to also talk about bringing the lived experiences of particular impacted communities to the forefront of their work. Stakeholder participants in all three cases described bringing their constituencies' stories into collaborative deliberations. One described a continuous flow of information in which CBOs educated other members about their lived realities, and CBOs then translated technical climate reports back to their members. "And it comes from both perspectives, some from bigger organizations understanding that these are some of the challenges confronting our community members, such as water quality, pollution, rising water, tides, but it's also for us to bring visibility to our community members to let them know that these things are actually happening... But once you delve deep and start hearing those stories, you realize that this is these are bigger issues that really impact the community as a whole. So we're trying to bring visibility on both ends." Most of the equity cases mentioned the value of community stories to inform bigger organizations' understanding of climate impacts to frontline communities.

One CBO emphasized the importance of community-specific messaging that communicated potential impacts to specific demographic groups in their area, noting that the needs of their African American, Pacific Islander, and Latinx communities were all distinct. Sharing the responsibility of translating information into accessible forms was a way for municipalities to learn culturally competent communication skills and for CBOs to lighten the burden of constantly acting as translators for the communities they serve. One CBO staffer reflected that, "it's a learning process for everyone involved."

Community-based knowledge was regarded as a critical asset for shaping policy and planning work in the equity cases. In two cases, CBOs brought specific expertise about green gentrification and housing issues in low-income neighborhoods. Another brought firsthand experience working with immigrant communities who had been displaced by climate-related disasters and were struggling to pay electricity bills in hotter summers. Through collaboration, these groups had a direct line of communication to tell planners what environmental changes mattered most to their communities and what solutions were most important to them.

Still, the equity conveners unanimously reported relying more on technical climate data than lived experience. Even when there was more space for CBOs to share their lived experiences within equity tables, this knowledge often entered the full collaborative through reports and updates. None reported significant time during meetings spent on storytelling or non-Western modes of knowledge expression. CBOs also did not discuss wanting a greater diversity of information, so it is possible that they were perfectly content with the benefits they derived from technical climate data (when well-translated for the communities they served), vulnerability assessments, greenhouse gas inventories, and the like.

The Comparison Cases

While the comparison cases also valued being responsive to the broader populations they served, there was less agreement between conveners and stakeholders about how to best represent community voices. One comparison case coordinator noted disagreements between local elected officials and non-profits about which one was better positioned to represent community concerns. Another two described their primary community engagement activities as educating the public, through events to publicize adaptation actions and disseminate reports on climate models through local media. While

community education is important – and spreading information can itself be empowering, especially when localized data on climate impacts did not previously exist – these groups seemed to give less priority to formal inclusion of community voices.

Whether collaborative meetings are private or open to members of the public also had bearing on CBO participation. One non-member stakeholder group mentioned that their organizational policy is to bring community members to the meetings of every coalition in which they participate, with the goal to build community ownership and develop communities' capacity to advocate for themselves. If community members' lived experience is valued in a collaborative space, they then have the option of empowering that community member to participate on the organization's behalf – fully realizing the potential to transfer ownership. This interviewee's organization chose to join a different climate collaborative in their area – one that was highly localized and involved more grassroots groups – partially because that group fully empowered their members to attend meetings, co-present, collect data as citizen scientists, and share information with each other. While it may be harder for regional collaboratives to involve communities to this extent due to their scale, it is worth noting that CBOs often choose venues for collaboration that allow them to fulfill the procedural aspects of their mission like grassroots capacity building. Beyond broad public engagement and education exercises, collaboratives have the potential to act as platforms for transferring ownership and power to communities themselves.

Comparing the Case Groups

There is significant power in the act of representation, and collaboratives that talked openly about who was authorized to speak on behalf of community voices were likelier to ensure their work benefited those people. Comparing the two case groups suggests that sharing the role of community liaison – and implementing clear procedures for gathering and translating community input – was linked to an increased equity focus. Those groups with a less developed equity focus were likelier to have unclear community engagement practices, one-directional information dissemination, and/or competition over which stakeholder was the logical community representative.

Still, there is a wide range of factors that influence the ways in which collaboratives interact with their communities. As an example, one case in a rural region reported a very direct relationship with their communities because most collaborative members were also involved in several other town committees about local environmental planning. While any

locality is susceptible to patterns of power consolidation and marginalization, it is worth noting that process mechanisms for community representation may look different in different areas due to a number of geographic, demographic, and cultural characteristics.

Process

The Equity Cases

One important function served by equity case conveners was collecting and spreading information about equitable climate planning outside the collaborative. All three equity coordinators spent time outside of meetings gathering input from additional communities that had less capacity to participate as formal members. For example, one equity case coordinator attended other coalitions with their CBO member to learn more about the health, economic, and environmental predictors of social vulnerability from more justice-focused groups. They then brought this knowledge back to the collaborative to help assess where they had knowledge gaps for building regional climate resiliency. Taking on this role required an acknowledgement that not every group with relevant information could reasonably be involved as full members of the climate collaborative. This convener noted, "But if you're open to conversation behind the door, and I can understand what you're doing, and the hard work that does those types of justice type groups, they do on a daily basis. That's fine. Let's just let's find the common space we can work in and figure out ways to be more resilient all the way around."

Similarly, conveners also spent staff time helping to develop and amplify materials produced by equity committees within broader networks of stakeholders and decision makers. Two coordinator teams used the equity materials created by their equity subcommittee to provide one-on-one consultations with non-member stakeholders interested in improving equity in their own community projects. Another group reported how helpful it was that collaborative staff could dedicate research time to help the equity subcommittee co-develop a climate resiliency framework. Collaborative coordinators can meaningfully use their reputational power, and knowledge from working closely with equity subcommittees, to be an extra mouthpiece for equity groups' recommendations. Dedicating collaborative staff time to amplifying equity information appears to be an important way of channeling power to groups who may have less access to these information channels.

While technical information is extremely important for determining local climate threats and responding effectively, a heavy reliance on highly technical information can act as a barrier to participation for community groups. Stakeholders in the equity cases reported feeling isolated, confused, and unable to participate when significant portions of collaborative meetings included highly technical jargon, especially acronyms and specialized language (without prior explanation). In one equity case, coordinators and stakeholders both emphasized their efforts to set clear expectations before meetings about what content would be covered and whether technical training was needed beforehand. Interestingly, none discussed what training was offered or whether formal opportunities existed to increase their technical capacities.

Technical content poses challenges not only for stakeholder groups without specific professional training, but interviews also revealed how challenging these words are to translate for communities where English is a second language and/or with low formal educational attainment. As one stakeholder put it, "We're both college educated, and even attending meetings. We're both like, what does that mean? How are we going to bring this back to our community if we don't understand it, and we also have to translate it into Spanish. And unfortunately, some of those words aren't translated correctly in Spanish. So it's like, you have to even simplify that information way more. So it'll be a lot." This group reported feeling marginally supported by municipal members of their collaborative to translate such materials, but this still presented a barrier.

The quantity of information included in meetings can also act as a barrier; stakeholders noted that packing too much in can be overwhelming, especially in remote meetings. One compounding reason for this differential is that community groups reported working on many different issues at once, compared to technical government staff with one primary subject area. Collaboratives that use technical data should be cognizant of the implications of including highly technical information and ensure CBOs have the training and translation capacity necessary to fully engage with this type of information.

The Comparison Cases

The comparison groups were also likely to prioritize technical information but paid less attention to whom this information served. They funded vulnerability assessments, conducted downscaled climate reports, and staff-level sustainability information. While possible they communicated with community groups in other ways, none reported

specifically tailoring this information to community groups or trying to disseminate information in culturally-specific ways.

        As an example of one approach a comparison case could have adopted to elicit more community participation, one non-participating stakeholder group mentioned that an important part of their organization's environmental justice programming is "ground truthing". They conducted citizen science projects with their members that held their municipality accountable for accurate air quality monitoring in low-income neighborhoods. As another example of groundtruthing, they augmented technical data by surveying community members about how certain patterns showed up in community experiences. Combining technical data with stories and grassroots science is a powerful way that collaboratives could systematically bridge community expertise with environmental analysis. However, the collaborative in this stakeholder's area did not appear to offer any opportunities for collaborative information gathering.

Comparing the Case Groups

        Ultimately, the stated goal of every collaborative group interviewed was to provide content that was equally beneficial for all stakeholder partners. One stakeholder noted that data is useful, but often for simply confirming truths communities already know in different terms (e.g. a community may not use the academic term "food desert", but residents know that there are no grocery stores nearby). Members repeated that technical data is useful to communities as long as it is well translated, tailored for the people it is intended to benefit, and thought of as equally valuable to existing community knowledge. The kinds of information deemed useful and valuable varied in every group.

V: DISCUSSION

Across the board, collaboratives are notoriously challenging to launch, grow, and sustain. They adopt different structures and scopes of work due to specific stakeholder needs, geographic conditions, and political contexts. Practices for increasing equity in collaboration are variable and emergent, though the findings presented here clearly point to opportunities for growth across the field. While a list of specific tools and strategies follows in Appendix A, here I present six of the strongest cross-cutting themes identified in this research that illuminate the nature of power, inclusion, and equitable participation in multi-sector collaboration. The following synthesis captures findings that impact multiple categories of power and draws comparisons to existing bodies of literature. A summary of these themes is presented in Figure 5.

Figure 5. Summary of Cross-Cutting Strategies
1. Recruiting CBOs working on the frontlines of climate change redistributes power to marginalized communities.
2. Equity-specific side tables serve as important affinity spaces where marginalized groups can share, learn, and work.
3. Design collaborative funding models to benefit those with the least access to resources.
4. Ensure technical information is accessible, relevant, and balanced with the lived experience of impacted communities.
5. Embrace non-neutral facilitation for the explicit benefit of historically marginalized groups.
6. Prioritize resilience-centered climate action.

Summary of Themes

1. *Recruiting CBOs working on the frontlines of climate change redistributes power to marginalized communities.*

The intentional inclusion of groups experiencing the greatest impacts of climate change is a prerequisite for beginning equitable collaborative work. In the fields of conflict resolution and consensus building, stakeholder selection is an extensive and formulaic

process in which faciliators identify potential participants based on a number of factors, including who is most impacted by an issue. As Bryson et al (2013) notes, "All too often, supposedly participatory processes end up including the 'usual suspects,' people who are easily recruited, vocal, and reasonably comfortable in public arenas. Stakeholder identification and analysis are critical tasks to undertake to ensure that marginalized groups are at least considered and may have a place at the table" (29). The comparison cases succumbed to this mistake more often – recruiting the 'usual suspects' with existing decision making authority – resulting in power consolidation within already-privileged institutions. This often resulted in narrow issue framing that perpetuated technocratic climate solutions rather than strategies grounded in social resiliency.

In cases that successfully prioritized equity, facilitators mapped out key interest groups and recruited both members and co-leaders that held traditional decision making roles *and* those who represented frontline communities' concerns. The repeated call to include CBOs early in the process reinforces a fundamental principle environmental justice and conflict resolution – that all affected stakeholder groups should be engaged in defining issues and framing policy narratives that affect them (Dandy et al., 2014; Pellow, 2018). According to equitable planning guidance, community engagement redistributes the most power if communities themselves eventually take ownership over planning decisions (González, 2019). Strategic stakeholder recruitment should still select for a wide variety of interests, but if impacted communities are adequately represented and have real influence, it appears that collaboratives can meaningfully delegate power to community groups.

Finally, this data confirms common guidance for facilitation teams to reflect the racial diversity of the populations with whom they work (Tint et al., 2017). Coordinators who openly spoke about their racial identities and made efforts to recruit non-white participants and co-leaders were better equipped to center equity approaches. Future research should explore how coordinators can build comfort discussing racial dynamics among collaborative participants and specifically recruit racial minorities from every sector.

2. *Equity-specific side tables serve as important affinity spaces where marginalized groups can share, learn, and work.*

There was strong support for developing equity work within equity-specific subcommittees. These groups were effective spaces for incubating community-based project ideas and developing guidance that helped all collaborative members to grow their

own equity work. Although it is still debatable whether creating separate tables for equity might sideline the topic, most interviewees believed this structure increased the extent to which the collaboratives at large prioritized equity-driven projects. For stakeholders, the committees also provided spaces to co-create subcultures that were separate from the full collaborative membership, which tended to be predominantly white and made up of traditional environmental professionals. Subcommittees were spaces where groups working on the intersection of many social and environmental problems could share knowledge and democratize decision making in a way that was harder to achieve in the large group.

This trend aligns with the practices of enclave deliberation and use of affinity spaces for underrepresented groups to deliberate in an environment that is less dominated by oppressive cultural norms (Karpowitz, 2014; Resolutions Northwest, 2020a). When policy spaces are dominated by strong normative "logics" – systems of beliefs, behaviors, and norms – deconstructing those logics takes great effort by groups who do not subscribe to them (Purdy, 2016). Young discusses this as the difference between external inclusion and internal exlusion; even if groups are invited to the table, they may not be fully able to participate if they do not adequately conform to prescribed cultural norms of participation. Stakeholders discussed these tables as places where they could develop deeper relationships with each other and discuss their lived experiences, two practices that decenter white norms of thinking and deliberating (Brigg & Bleiker, 2011). While collaboratives should continue to deconstruct the expectations of participation to ensure marginalized groups feel adequately included in every venue, subcommittees provided important spaces where CBOs could interact in mutually supportive and culturally familiar ways.

3. *Design collaborative funding models to benefit those with the least access to resources.*

In order to increase the participation of marginalized groups and CBOs, collaboratives should design their funding models to balance resource power. This happened in one of two ways in the data – by soliciting grant funding from institutions with strong commitments to equity or by paying CBO participants for their time. Common guidance for equitable community engagement includes capacity building through providing adequate resources (e.g., training, staffing, childcare, process support, etc.) so that community-based groups can engage effectively (Georgetown Climate Center, 2020). While

groups often use philanthropic models to supplement governmental funding for these types of engagement efforts, the membership/stipend model is a unique contribution to the collaborative governance literature. Because governments derive other benefits from participating in collaboratives for which they are willing to pay, collaborative groups are uniquely positioned to pool those funds and redistribute some of them back to frontline communities.

Further, while the stipend model for CBO participants is a key equity strategy for engaging under-resourced groups, equitable resourcing could go farther towards addressing systemic deficiencies in staff capacity. For instance, collaborative staff could help community groups seek funding to hire new staff members, increase stipends to cover the up-front costs of hiring, or use their influence with local foundations (where present) to investigate and shift funding priorities towards frontline groups. Although capacity building for underrepresented groups is a fundamental strategy for equitable community engagement (Georgetown Climate Center, 2020), these strategies that address systemic funding imbalances appear to be new additions to the collaborative governance literature and should be explored further.

4. *Ensure technical information is accessible, relevant, and balanced with the lived experience of impacted communities.*

While all the cases utilized technical information to assess climate risks and develop solutions, groups worked more equitably when they translated technical data into community-specific messaging and created space for direct representation of community voices within deliberation. Translating technical data as an inclusive practice is highly consistent with the literature on public engagement in environmental management; technical terms should be thoroughly explained, public materials should be culturally relevant, and messaging should center the most relevant details for impacted community members (Briley et al., 2015). These findings also contributed evidence to the literature that CBOs see collaboratives as important spaces to increase their technical knowledge about complex management problems like climate change. As long as information was tailored to specific audiences and proper technical training was provided, highly data-driven collaboratives provided clear benefits to CBO members.

None of the collaboratives included in this study discussed inclusion of diverse ontological perspectives to the extent that they are highlighted as equitable engagement

practices in the literature. While the data confirmed that collaboratives saw benefits in diversifying forms of knowledge (such as paying community groups to share their lived experiences at the same rate as technical expertise), few practiced communicative inclusion strategies that moved beyond rationalist forms of expression and deliberation. Spending more time telling stories is an incredibly important tool for centering feminist, non-Western, and other non-dominant worldviews (Pajnik, 2006). Integrating stories with technical data can also augment abstract scientific data and/or help make it more tangible and actionable. A large segment of the literature about knowledge-based power in natural resource collaboration focuses on indigenous knowledge systems, and by not including any collaborative groups with indigenous or tribal partners, this research missed an important opportunity to identify deeper power imbalances in ontological systems. It is worth questioning, however, why none of the cases included indigenous partners, given that they all operate on the ancestral land of indigenous peoples.

5. *Embrace non-neutral facilitation for the explicit benefit of historically marginalized groups.*

It is commonly recognized that leaders can make or break collaborative endeavors (Linden, 2010), but often leaders are considered purely content-neutral actors who are expected to support the interests of all groups equally. While findings related to agenda-setting and recruitment confirm the benefits of third party facilitators to guide process dynamics on behalf of all interests, it is also clear that facilitator-coordinators were instrumental in centering an equity approach. All three equity case coordinators used their leadership positions to set equity as a baseline standard for their members, thereby tipping the scales on behalf of marginalized groups. This finding strongly supports the use of facilitation strategies that move beyond "neutrality" for the specific benefit of underrepresented voices, a practice that has been called "activist mediation" (Forester & Stitzel, 1989). Especially when CBOs did not join collaboratives immediately, setting an equity focus from the very beginning allowed for ongoing recruitment of frontline groups by demonstrating a clear suite of potential benefits. Still, a fully equitable approach would transfer ownership over this scope-setting phase to communities themselves (González, 2019). Linking these strategies – equity-driven facilitation and community co-design – is a powerful method for transfering power to marginalized groups. Further research and practice should reassess the notion that principled facilitation – with the specific intent to

balance historic patterns of exclusion – is "activist" in nature. The coordinators in these cases saw their roles as equity leaders and multipartial facilitators as mutually supportive.

6. *Prioritize resilience-centered climate action.*

This final theme diverges slightly from the core questions guiding this research because it reflects the content of collaborative work in addition to process factors. However, these findings made clear that collaboratives were more likely to engage marginalized voices when they prioritized climate change adaptation priorities rather than climate mitigation. This is very reflective of the literature. Common guidance for equity-driven climate planning emphasizes that climate resiliency should center the ongoing risks and stressors facing frontline communities and deliver benefits that both address existing concerns and create more resilience to withstand climate impacts (Georgetown Climate Center, 2020).

The equity cases were also predominantly made of up local government members, suggesting that collaboratives may be particularly well-positioned to support equitable planning when NGO partners can shape and guide adaptation projects. This is consistent with considerable research on equitable climate adaptation planning that focuses on government-CBO parterships (Bauer & Steurer, 2014; Brink & Wamsler, 2018; Kalesnikaite, 2019). CBOs focused on policy advocacy and mitigation – and particularly those whose theory of change required targeting local institutions with adversarial campaigns – were less likely to engage in collaboration. While an equity approach means involving communities deeply in all decisions that affect their lives – which, by nature, should also encompass climate mitigation strategies – adaptation may act as a fertile starting point for diverse actors to build trust around local climate planning before tackling issues that require more substantial policy changes, such as energy transition.

An additional concern raised by this research was some participants' desire to discuss complex tradeoffs associated with the speed and timescale of climate action. Critical perspectives in conflict resolution have pointed out how the tendency to tackle "long-hanging fruit" often prevents stakeholders concerned with deeper structural inequalities from ever fully addressing their interests (Mayer, 2004). Some members of these cases expressed an interest in openly discussing the complicated implications of various strategies with others in the collaborative (for example, taking more time to include community voices may mean that critical adaptation projects are delayed). It was generally

unclear from interviews whether justice-based CBOs thought their collaboratives were addressing structural concerns at the heart of climate injustice (a core tenant of equitable planning). Acknowledging that groups' ideal approaches to changemaking may never perfectly align, collaboratives that practice discussing the deeper implications of their work appeared likelier to build lasting trust and resilient partnerships.

Weaknesses & Areas for Further Exploration

Collaboratives are certainly not a silver bullet for equitable planning. In some areas, CBOs will likely always find more success using adversarial approaches to deliver critical change to communities on the frontlines of climate change – particularly when decision makers are not yet politically supportive of robust climate action. The equity-driven governments in these cases were primarily large, urban, progressive areas where relatively powerful networks of organizers and activists have been advocating for climate justice in local politics for many years. A fruitful area for follow up research would be looking at whether frontline communities in the comparison case regions – and more broadly – have the infrastructure needed to create organizations and advocate their interests. An inherent shortcoming of collaborative governance model is that stakeholder interests are channeled through formal representatives, requiring a level of organization inaccessible to some of the most vulnerable groups – particularly those without full legal status. Collaboratives can remedy this partially by engaging more directly with communities, but the representation model may create some insurmountable barriers for true community ownership.

Interview analysis also made very clear that while there are some parallels between the experiences of stakeholders analyzed in this study (small non-profits, community-based organizations, and justice-oriented organizations), each organization varied widely in its own internal practices and demographic composition. The broad parameters of this research and the relatively low participation of non-profit stakeholders in these cases mean that complex factors of diversity were all considered under the single banner of relatively underrepresented and under-resourced stakeholders. Of the six interviews with stakeholder groups, two were with BIPOC staff members of environmental justice organizations, two were with white staff members representing organizations that primarily serve minority communities, and two were with white staff members of community-based nonprofits with very low budgets and only recently emerging interests in environmental justice. These groups experience a wide range of privilege and power, and

future research should focus on how individual markers of diversity – race, ethnicity, immigration status, ability, gender, etc. – specifically impacts rates of participation and dynamics of power. Tools like stakeholder power mapping, used in equity-informed mediation, could support conveners and researchers alike to understand the unique positioning of each stakeholder participant within intersecting systems of power and oppression.

VI: CONCLUSION

In an era defined by racial reckonings, catastrophic climatic changes, and systemic breakdowns in democratic institutions, it is imperative that we learn to build new systems for inclusive decision making from those who have lost – and stand to lose – the most. Climate change is perhaps the most complex challenge humans have ever faced, and every decision, from local to global, carries implications about whose lives matter and who deserves the right to self-determination.

Perennial conflicts in approaches to climate policy – technocratic versus justice-based approaches, incremental action versus sweeping policy change, and procedural versus substantive justice – played out in subtle and explicit ways in every collaborative studied in this project. While some were more successful than others at navigating these tensions and addressing every group's most pressing concerns, collaboratives will always exist within political systems that are based in zero-sum economies and legacies of oppression. Taking small steps towards balancing power in collaborative governance regimes is merely one facet of re-designing equitable systems from the ground up.

In sum, collaboratives created platforms for inclusion and equity based on the extent to which they both increased formal access to decision making spaces and changed adopted those spaces to fit the needs of communities. While the former relies on folding marginalized groups into institutions of dominant culture, the latter suggests that the institutions themselves must change to substantially incorporate the knowledge, worldviews, culture, and expertise of voices who have previously been excluded. Because collaboratives operate in a space somewhere between formal sectors, they present an intriguing opportunity for creating participatory spaces that subvert traditional power hierarchies. Based on subtle design choices, these models can either create slightly more participatory versions of existing models, or deeply reconsider who holds power in our society.

APPENDICES

A. TOOLS & STRATEGIES FOR EQUITABLE PROCESS DESIGN

The following list of tools is the product of interviews with collaborative coordinators and stakeholders in this study. Some tools are currently in use and others reflect recommendations made by participants and non-participants about how collaboratives could better serve the needs of frontline and underserved communities. Several are the author's recommendations based on specific barriers to participation identified in interviews. The list is not intended to be a comprehensive toolkit for designing inclusive and equitable participation – there are many other strategies in literature and practice that are not repeated here. Rather, it is intended to emphasize particular tools that balance the forms of structural power identified in this study. While these techniques emerged within the context of climate change collaboratives, the toolkit is intended to be a guide for anyone interested in increasing their capacity for balancing structural power imbalances in collaborative settings.

TOOLS & STRATEGIES FOR EQUITABLE PROCESS DESIGN, CONT'D

Tool	Description
Intentional stakeholder identification	Map potential stakeholder groups using a variety of criteria, paying particular attention to those who are most impacted by the problem.
Targeted recruitment	Actively invite stakeholder groups to participate.
Stakeholder gaps analysis	Before formally launching, ask what stakeholders are not yet on board and consider what barriers they face to participation.
Stakeholder interviewing	Use stakeholder interviews to begin collectively defining issues, concerns, and mutual benefits. Include all impacted stakeholder groups – not only members.
Publicize membership opportunities	Include information about member benefits and an interest form on publicly accessible websites and other online platforms.
Waive membership fees	Do not charge membership fees for stakeholder groups who are chronically under-resourced and sustained through fundraising.
Subsidize participation	Pay stipends to CBO participants for their time spent participating; Cover travel expenses; Provide food during meetings.
Publicize accommodations	Ensure low-resource groups are told during the recruitment process about formal opportunities to subsidize or ease the financial burden of their participation.
Subsidize staff hiring	Increase stipends and/or grant funding to offset hiring costs for under-staffed CBOs.
Diversify representation	Select demographically diverse individuals to represent all stakeholder organizations.
Hire diverse coordinators	Recruit coordinators that are reflective of frontline community demographics, and distribute benefits/responsibilities equitably.
Modify expectation for immediate co-benefits	Acknowledging that some justice-oriented CBOs may use the collaborative as a place to begin learning and working in the climate change arena, reduce expectations for formal contributions to climate planning at the outset.

Include CBOs' members in meetings	Invite CBOs to bring members of the public to collaborative meetings as participants.
Create separate equity tables	Create affinity tables to allow marginalized groups safe spaces to discuss, establish cultural norms, and implement independent projects as desired.
Take direction from communities	Design opportunities for constituencies – especially those most impacted by the issue – to engage in and directly influence collaborative work; Implement clear procedures for gathering and utilizing community input.
Collective scope-setting	Include diverse stakeholders in initial conversations about the scope and mission of a collaborative prior to its founding; Use interviews with impacted communities who cannot participate as members to shape scope-setting conversations.
Reevaluate short- and medium-term goals frequently	Collectively reevaluate collaborative priorities to include newly recruited groups and ensure work is benefitting non-profits on short grant cycles.
Share the responsibility of translating technical materials	Use collaboration as an opportunity for CBOs to teach other stakeholders how to translate technical climate information into forms that are useful and accessible to specific demographic groups.
Create a municipality-CBO "buddy system"	Encourage municipalities to foster partnerships with their local communities by ensuring each municipal member recruits one CBO partner in their locality to join the collaborative.
Select a facilitator	Designate a trusted third-party facilitator who can reasonably understand and consider CBOs' missions during stakeholder selection, scope-setting, and decision making; Hire co-facilitators directly from CBOs networks and/or staff members.
Lead with principle	Move beyond facilitator "neutrality" to frame group conversations in a way that benefits marginalized groups.
Make mutual benefits explicit	Think carefully about who collaborative work is meant to serve; Clarify roles, expectations, and benefits of membership.

Flexibility & iterative co-design	Periodically check in with stakeholders about operational structures and relationships, allowing for collective redesigning at any stage.
Productive dialogue & conflict	Foster a culture that welcomes conflict and encourages tough learning conversations.
Institutionalize broader collaboration	Encourage government-CBO partnerships that extend beyond the collaborative's formal work, in which governments shift decision-making authority to community groups and value their expertise at the same rate as technical consultants.
Distribute project resources	Create clear financial benefits by funding work that's aligned with CBO goals.
Fundraising capacity-building	Offer CBOs grant-writing training or other benefits to aid their fundraising efforts.
Translate materials	Translate all materials into languages accessible to particular audiences (through formal language translation, culturally competent messaging, and relevant explaining documentation for technical subjects).
Minimize technical language	Use technical language only when necessary and be mindful of its impacts on those without traditional environmental backgrounds.
Diversify information types	Allocate space for diverse forms of knowledge and expression.
Utilize 'citizen science'	Democratize data collection by using 'ground truthing' or 'citizen science' methods.
Conveners act as hubs of equity information	Use collaborative staff time for conveners to act as a mouthpiece for CBOs' equity priorities and recommendations.
Articulate a theory of change	Make tensions between adversarial and non-adversarial approaches explicit topics of conversation; Encourage understanding and depersonalization of power-building approaches.
Co-create glossary of equity-related words	Define commonly used words like equity, resilience, environmental justice, and impacted community.

CODE	OPERATIONALIZATION
AUTHORITY	Discuss the collaborative's legitimacy and access within policymaking spheres outside its direct work; Discuss stakeholders' access to decision-makers.
BENEFITS	Mention who benefits from the collaborative's work; Mention specific co-benefits stakeholders receive (co-benefits: added value for communities beyond the direct benefits of a stable climate).
CONFLICT	Mention disagreements among members and how they were managed.
CONTEXT	Discuss the broader political/policy landscape outside the bounds of the collaborative's formal work.
EDUCATION	Talk about educating the community, fellow collaborative members, policymakers, etc.
EQUITY	Describe actions that specifically benefit underrepresented, underserved, and/or vulnerable populations.
EXCLUSION	Discuss patterns of particular stakeholder groups being left out of decision-making spaces and roles (in government generally or in the collaborative).
FACILITATION	Describe the people and processes that aid collaborative members to do their work, particularly within meetings.
FEEDBACK	Discuss cycle of reflection and improvement among members and/or between members and coordinators.
FRAMING	Define what climate change is or is not; Make claims about what topics/solutions are important and valuable.
IMPACTS - coastal change	Talk about sea level rise, coastal hazards, tidal flooding, etc.
IMPACTS - disproportionate	Talk about climate change affecting some communities/populations more than others.
IMPACTS - economic	Talk about climate change impacts on local economies, businesses, and groups of various socioeconomic statuses; Talk about the intersection of climate impacts and other economic vulnerabilities (i.e., poverty).
IMPACTS - extreme weather	Talk about flooding, storms, heatwaves, drought, etc.
IMPACTS - infrastructure	Talk about critical infrastructure, housing issues, and patterns of development.
IMPACTS - migration	Talk about patterns of population change as a result of climate-induced changes.
IMPACTS - public health	Talk about air pollution, health effects of extreme heat, social indicators of health, or other public health related impacts of climate change.
IMPACTS - wildfire	Talk about patterns of wildfire as a result of climate change.

CODING GUIDE, CONT'D

INCLUSION	Discuss feeling heard, valued, and included in collaborative decision making.
INFLUENCE	Discuss access to decision making power within the collaborative.
INFORMATION	Discuss the kinds of information the collaborative uses to do its work.
LEADERSHIP	Talk about those who lead collaborative work (i.e., staff, administrators, facilitators, conveners, coordinators).
MITIGATION	Discuss efforts to reduce GHG emissions.
NETWORKS	Discusses relationships and partnerships within and outside the collaborative's members.
OUTCOMES	Describes actions, products, and projects successfully achieved by collaborative.
PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT	Discuss educating, liaising, or representing community inputs from the public at large.
RACE	Discuss the racial identities of collaborative members or other individuals.
RECRUITMENT	Talk about the process of recruiting new stakeholder groups to participate in the collaborative; Talk about the process of being invited and considering whether to join.
RESOURCES	Discuss how time and money are held, shared, or managed by stakeholders and the collaborative
SCOPE-SETTING	Discusses the process of defining mission, goals, vision, and projects of the collaborative; Talk about the process of creating meeting agendas.
STAKEHOLDERS	Refer to specific groups or kinds of groups that are engaged (or could theoretically be engaged) as collaborative members or partners; Talk about who represents stakeholder groups in the collaborative.
STRUCTURE	Refers to administrative aspects (e.g. membership structure, committees, representatives), process elements (e.g. meeting frequency), or broad purposes of collaboration (e.g. joint planning).
THEORY OF CHANGE	Talks about the methodology for achieving certain kinds of goals.
TRUST	Discuss amicable and mutually supportive relationships between stakeholders and/or coordinators.

Equity in Climate Collaboration – Coordinators Interview Guide

Context
- How would you briefly describe the history of climate change planning and policymaking in your region?
- Who is most impacted by the effects of climate change in your region?

Process design
- Who was responsible for convening the collaborative?
- How would you describe the initial process of recruiting members to the collaborative?
    - How were potential members identified?
    - Was diversity (race, class, ethnicity, gender, etc.) a factor in participant recruitment?
- Who was involved in defining the collaborative's scope of work?
- What types of information were used to frame initial conversations during the group's formation?
- In your opinion, have any members of the collaborative been previously marginalized from climate change policy conversations?
- How is the collaborative funded?
    - What factors determined the funding structure?
    - Who designed and approved the funding structure?

Process dynamics
- Are your meetings facilitated?
- How would you describe your meetings?
- Who participates most often during meetings? Is there any attempt to balance or empower particular voices in the room?
    - What attempts, if any, have been made to include the perspectives of non-participating stakeholder groups in the group's deliberations?
- Have there been disagreements among members about the collaborative's priority areas?
    - If so, how have those disagreements been handled?
- Do any members experience barriers to attending meetings and otherwise participating in the collaborative? (e.g. staffing, funding, scheduling, geography, language, etc.)
    - If so, have any attempts been made to reduce those barriers?
- In your opinion, who benefits from the collaborative's work?
- Have you participated in any trainings related to racial equity, privilege, inclusion, etc.?
- Is there anything else you'd like to say about the collaborative that I have not yet asked about?

Equity in Climate Collaboration – Stakeholder Participants Interview Guide

Context:
- How would you briefly describe the history of climate change planning and policymaking in your region?
  - What groups have historically been most influential?
  - What issues have received the most attention?
  - What is your relationship to decision-makers on climate issues?
- Who is most impacted by the effects of climate change in your region?

Process Design:
- How did you first become involved in the collaborative?
- Why did you decide to participate in the collaborative?
- Were you involved in defining the collaborative's scope and mission?
  - If so, at what stage in the group's formation?
  - To what extent have you influenced the collaborative's work since joining?
- To what extent does the collaborative's work align with your group's mission, values, and interests?
  - How does the collaborative compare with other potential venues or strategies for advancing your interests?
- Were you offered any accommodations or incentives to participate?

Process Dynamics:
- What kinds of information about climate change and its impacts does your organization find most valuable?
- How would you describe your meetings?
- Have there been disagreements among members about what climate issues are most important or what responses are most worthwhile? If so, how have those been addressed?
- Do you feel your organization's perspectives and contributions have been valued?
- Have you experienced any barriers to attending meetings or participating in the collaborative? (e.g. staffing, funding, scheduling, geography, language, etc.)
  - If so, have any attempts been made to reduce those barriers?
- Has participating in the collaborative been worth your time and effort?
  - What have you gained as a part of your participation?
  - Have any specific projects helped advance your organization's goals?
  - Do you consider collaboration an effective approach for advancing your interests with regard to climate change planning?
- Is there anything else you'd like to say about the collaborative that I have not yet asked about?

Interview Guide – Non-Member Stakeholders

Context:
- How would you briefly describe the history of climate change planning and policymaking in your region?
  - What groups have historically been most influential?
  - What is your relationship to decision-makers on climate issues?
  - What issues have received the most attention?

- Who is most impacted by the effects of climate change in your region?

Relationship to collaborative:
- How would you describe your organization's mission and primary activities?
- How did you first become aware of the collaborative?
- What is your impression of the collaborative's work in your area?
    - To the best of your knowledge, how are the collaborative's activities similar to or different from your organization's mission, interests, and values?
- Have you considered joining the collaborative? Why or why not?
    - Was your group ever invited to participate in the collaborative? If so, by whom?
    - How did you weigh whether participation in the collaborative would be worth your time and effort?
    - How do other venues for collaboration compare with the aforementioned collaborative group?
- How is your organization funded?
- What kinds of information about climate change and its impacts does your group find most valuable?
- Do you consider collaboration an effective approach for advancing your interests with regard to climate change planning?
- What would have to change in order for the collaborative to become a desirable venue to advance your interests?
    - Are there any accommodations or incentives that would make it possible for your organization to participate?
- Is there anything else you'd like to say about your organization's work or the collaborative that I have not yet asked about?

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