HOW PROGRESSIVES TOOK ADVANTAGE OF MODERATE DISCONTENT:

POLITICAL OPPORTUNITY, FRAMING AND MOBILIZATION AT THE LOCAL LEVEL

by

SARA L. FISHER

B.A., WICHITA STATE UNIVERSITY, 1996
M.A., KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY, 1999

AN ABSTRACT OF A DISSERTATION

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Department of Sociology, Anthropology and Social Work
College of Arts and Sciences

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY
Manhattan, Kansas

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Abstract

This paper asks why a progressive social movement formed in a conservative place. The People for a Progressive University City (PPUC) formed as a Political Action Committee (PAC) in a mid-sized community in order to influence the city commission and school board election of 2005. Resource Mobilization theory assumes that social movements form when they have access to resources including money, networks and leadership (Barkan 1979, McCarthy and Zald 1977). Political Opportunity theory assumes that social movements form when opportunities for mobilization are visible (Goodwin, Jaspers and Jaswin 1999, Tarrow 1996). The Framing Perspective assumes that social movements form when they describe grievances and their solutions in a way that is reasonable to potential participants (Benford and Snow 2000, Gamson and Modigliani 1989). I have taken an Action Research approach to understand what developments led to the organization's formation and which theory best described why the movement formed in 2005. Through 31 in-depth interviews with community members, I concluded that no one theory alone can explain why the organization formed. I argue that the best theoretical explanation is a synthesis of all three. I outline several theoretical implications as well as practical implications for community organizing in University City. I argue that the future of the PPUC will depend on how it responds to changes in community discontent and if it is able to mobilize people. Additionally, I suggest the story of the PPUC has implications for the study of social movements in general.

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Acknowledgements

I owe my greatest appreciation to the people of University City, including the activists and organizers, the politicians, and citizens. This story is about the activists who mobilized and organized. It is about politicians and the decisions they made and it is about the citizens for whom we all work.

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Dedication

I dedicate this project to the people of University City because it is a story about them. I hope the citizens find this project useful. I also dedicate my work to my fellow activists, especially my activist mentors, Angela and John, both of whom I hold in highest regard for their ceaseless and courageous activism.

Finally, I dedicate the conclusive piece of my graduate work to the late Dr. Leonard E. Bloomquist, my advisor, mentor and friend. I miss him very much. I think he would have liked this project.

CHAPTER 1 - How University City Threw the Bums Out

City Politics

University City is a midsized college town in the central Midwest. The city has a commission/manager governmental structure. Every two years, three of the five commissioners run for re-election. Each election cycle, two of the three seats are designated as four-year terms. The top two candidates get the four year terms, the candidate with the fewest number of votes gets a two-year term. The University City school district educates approximately 5,500 students each year. A seven-member board and superintendent govern United School District 494.[1] Every two years, three board seats are open. All board members serve four-year terms. The aim of this project is to analyze the University City local elections in 2005, and the developments that led to the formation of a local political action committee.

Contentious Issues

During the 1998 renovation of University City's municipal building, contractors rediscovered a stone monument inscribed with the Ten Commandments in the construction zone.[2] This discovery forced the city commission to decide whether to find a new location for the monument near City Hall or move it to another location. Seven community members who objected to plans to put the commandments near City Hall filed a preemptive suit against the city to ensure it was not situated at City Hall.[3] A motion to find an alternative location for the monument was approved by the city commission by a three to two vote. One of the three

[1] The community name, the school district number, and all of the persons and institutions (like schools) have been changed for anonymity.
[2] The Moses/Christian laws outlined in the Old Testament Christian texts.
[3] Proponents of the location painted a car with the Ten Commandments and parked it in front of the city building, avoiding getting a parking ticket by moving it every day.

commissioners who voted for moving the monument was immediately challenged in a recall election, which subsequently failed.

Zoning was another contentious issue in University City during this period. University City, like other communities, is characterized by older neighborhoods with perpendicular streets and small lots and cul-de-sac-style suburban growth. The older neighborhoods of University City adjacent to the Red State University campus are filled with student apartments that have been converted from single family homes. A significant number of these properties are operated by management companies and owned by absentee landlords. In response to the deterioration of these properties, longer term residents in some of these neighborhoods organized neighborhood associations to try to slow what they saw as neighborhood deterioration and lobby for code enforcement. In the Spring of 2001, a number of neighborhood associations came together to form the University City Neighborhood Alliance. The alliance formed to lobby for better zoning and construction regulations in the older neighborhoods. The neighborhood alliance proposed "down-zoning"[4] in some parts of the older neighborhoods and construction "overlays"[5] in other neighborhoods. These proposals were a reaction to the construction of new "Super Duplexes." Super Duplexes were typically constructed by developers who purchased a single family home in need of repair, tore it down and recovered the lot with rectangular shaped, two-story, four-unit buildings that included parking for as many as six vehicles. Super Duplexes were seen as undesirable and considered "unattractive" by people living in the neighborhood (and others in

[4] "Down-zoning" refers to changes in the city code from allowing "four unrelated persons per unit" (R4) to "two unrelated persons per unit" (R2). Some neighborhoods were down-zoned from R4 to R2, other neighborhoods were down-zoned from R2 to R1.

[5] Overlays are construction codes that specify the character of new construction including lot coverage, façade, overhangs and windows.

the community) because they covered nearly the entire lot, contributed to neighborhood overcrowding and stressed the water and sewer infrastructure.

Residents in the affected neighborhoods turned to the city commission for relief from the undesirable neighborhood changes in their neighborhood. But while the Super Duplexes were unpopular, they were legal. In order to stop the construction of Super Duplexes, neighborhood associations had three options. They could lobby the city commission to change the zoning laws, change the membership of the city commission, or change the planning board, a powerful seven-member advisory board. The Mayor of University City appoints four members of the planning board, while three members are appointed by the county commission. In 2004, membership on the planning board included a realtor, an owner of commercial property, a developer, an employee of the insurance industry, and a banker.

University City is also a bedroom community for military personnel who are stationed at a nearby army post. The community prides itself on being an attractive place for military families to live and for soldiers to spend their money. Many University City businesses offer discounts to military personnel and their dependents and the schools give special attention to the needs of military families. University City strives to support the troops. So when the United States invaded Iraq in May of 2003 without the support of the United Nations Security Council, some people questioned whether flying the United Nations (U.N.) flag contradicted efforts to support the troops. In May 2003, the commission decided to remove the U.N. flag that had flown on the city's flagpole since 1989. Of course, not everyone in University City is a military dependent, nor did everyone in University City support the U.S. invasion and occupation of Iraq. Some people thought that the removal of the U.N. flag was inappropriate. Critics pointed out that

University City has a diverse population, and many foreign visitors. They argued that the removal of the flag might be regarded as an unfriendly gesture.

The Conservative Reaction

After the election of 2001, the tone of city commission meetings began to shift, taking on a religious air. The 2001 election was the first general election since the Ten Commandments were moved from City Hall to a private institution, and resulted in the addition of one social conservative to the commission. In 2003, conservatives gained two more seats on the commission, giving them the majority. By 2005, conservatives formed a socially and fiscally conservative majority on the commission, due in part to the mobilization of religious voters after the Ten Commandments controversy.

In 2002, the mayor established a lighted "Christmas Parade." The Christmas Parade was to be the community's kick off to a city-sponsored gift and food drive. Some people in the community were offended by his use of the term "Christmas Parade," instead of the more inclusive "Holiday Parade." As a result, Mayor Bowman changed the name of the parade to "Holiday Parade" in 2004.

The best example of the shift to the right came in 2003, when Mayor Majors was sworn in during a community prayer ceremony. The mayor said he wanted all commission meetings to begin with prayer, and the following month, Captain Max, of the Salvation Army, opened the city commission meeting with prayer and a "laying on of hands." In October 2003, Mayor Majors issued a proclamation in support of National Marriage Protection Week. In doing so, he supported President Bush's call to recognize the "institution of traditional marriage." In November, 120 of the mayor's supporters attended a commission meeting to support the mayor after other residents in the community objected to the proclamation.

University City conservatives were also concerned about reducing the size and influence of local government. To this end, the commission proposed the elimination of all public support of social service programs. Sales tax revenue supported a number of University City social services, including the Boys and Girls Club, emergency shelters for people and animals, homecare, hospice and a domestic-violence safe house. An advisory board, appointed by the Mayor, annually allocated $315,000 to fund these programs. However, in July 2004, two commissioners (both social conservatives) proposed that all funding to social services be eliminated. They suggested that organizations turn to private funders and faith-based organizations to obtain financial support. When word of this proposal spread more, than 120 people attended the commission meeting to oppose the motion. The motion failed.

Personal Politics

Residents opposed to the conservative majority on the commission not only objected to their social and economic agenda, they also objected to their personal demeanor, how they interacted with the public, city staff and each other. During meetings, one commissioner rolled his eyes when people made public comments, another suggested that if people wanted to find quality jobs they should "take their nose rings out and speak better English." One particular commissioner criticized the work of city staff during televised commission meetings. Commission members also behaved badly toward other members. After one contentious vote, which resulted in the elimination of a grant program and a city staffer, a commissioner (who did not realize the local cable television feed was still connected) told another commissioner to "go fuck" himself. In fact, what motivated one city commission candidate to run for office was the fact that Mayor Majors suggested the funding for social services be eliminated even though he

said he could not understand the city budget. A growing number of residents objected to the commission's policy decisions, and their personal demeanor.

School Board Politics

During this period, the University City school board also made unpopular decisions. As the military deployed soldiers and realigned bases, the school district was forced to deal with changing student enrollments. Sometimes military changes resulted in increased enrollment and funding, sometimes they led to a significant decline in student enrollments and revenue. During the late 1980s and early 1990s, school board officials had built three new school buildings to accommodate a growing student population. New buildings were needed to accommodate the steady growth of the community and to relieve classroom and building overcrowding. Buildings were used beyond their capacity, some classrooms had 30 or more kids, teachers held classes in closets, and 'special' classes like music and art were assigned to teachers peddling a cart.[6] In 1993, the school board approved the construction of one new elementary school and two middle schools. The elementary school served students on the west side of town, the most affluent part of the community. It would be the largest elementary school in the district. One middle school was built on the western edge of town, the other on the eastern edge of town. These new buildings opened in 1996. However, between 1993 and 2004, University City's student enrollment declined by 1,709, the equivalent of three elementary schools.[7]

In the late 1990s a significant number of military personnel were deployed overseas as part of a base realignment plan. The realignment had mixed effects on the community. On one

[6] Teachers typically assigned to "closets" are special education, occupational therapy and speech teachers. Today, some buildings still use closets as classrooms. When classes are "taught from a cart," the teacher is asked to keep class materials on a cart and move it around the building for instruction in music or art. This limits the kind of equipment the music or art teacher has access to and the kind of lessons that can be taught.
[7] The 1993 enrollment was 6,910 students. The 2004 was only 5,210.

hand, the declining number of military personnel reduced demand for housing, which slowed the increase in rental prices and improved part-time job opportunities for students. On the other hand, the realignment and movement of military personnel out of the community reduced school enrollment and with that state funding, and overall sales-tax revenue.

With declining enrollment and the subsequent reduction in public funds, the school district was forced to cut costs to make up for lost revenue. At the same time, the cost of educating each student also increased because of inflation, rising costs of energy, and the pressures of President Bush's 'No Child Left Behind' policies. Further, the state had not increased its per pupil contribution in step with inflation and the rising cost of education.

Closing Schools

By 2002, the school board decided to cut costs by closing school buildings. By closing buildings, the board could cut utility and maintenance costs, and reduce the costs associated with transportation and building support staff. The original school-closure proposal included selling the closed school buildings. However, after the buildings were closed, officials learned that one building sat on a public square, which meant it could not be sold. Rather, it had to remain for public use. Further, because of the school closures, the board had to redraw district lines to accommodate displaced students.

After much debate about which buildings to close, the board decided to close the two oldest and smallest schools in district. Both buildings were part of the older, downtown University City neighborhood. They served families who lived in the older part of the town, where absentee landlords built Super Duplexes. Generally, people in the community *tolerated* the school closures in 2002. They understood that the board needed budget relief and they

preferred closing a school rather than losing art and music programs.[8] Some families moved closer to the school they had been reassigned to, in order to keep the sense of "neighborhood school." But other families took their kids out of University City's school district, enrolling them in faith-based schools or in surrounding districts. For example, ten percent of the families from Fred Edger elementary school left the district when the building closed in 2002.

Closing MORE schools

Two years later, budget problems remained, and in 2004, the board again took up the discussion of school closure. The Administration proposed closing a third elementary school building. The board debated on whether to close Southside or Johnson Elementary Schools, which were the remaining "neighborhood schools" in the oldest part of town.[9] Only one building, Southside Elementary School, was given serious consideration because the other school, Johnson Elementary School, was located on a public square and could not be sold.

Again, the board would have to redraw district lines to accommodate displaced students. The school board also considered a proposal to relocate the sixth graders from the district's elementary school to the two middle schools. The prospect of sending sixth graders to the middle schools got the attention of families all across the district. In the minds of many people, the "sixth grade move" and the school closure were part of the same proposal. Many people in the community opposed the idea of closing a third elementary school and objected to the idea of moving sixth graders to the middle schools. Parents began showing up at weekly school board meetings and speaking out in protest. They marched on district headquarters and organized a

[8] A frequent refrain by the school board was that one of the ways to cut the budget was to eliminate all special classes like art, music and Spanish.

[9] "Neighborhood school" highlights the fact that these older, smaller schools are located in densely populated older neighborhoods, generally referred to as "downtown." The "older neighborhoods" attract families with low-to-moderate incomes, families of color, and families attracted to the diversity of the older neighborhoods. The 'older neighborhood' associations of University City are politically active and are considered by other community activist groups to be well-organized.

"No Sixth Grade Move" yard-sign campaign. The board eventually voted to close the third building pending a review of the 2005 enrollment numbers, an injunction by the state supreme court concerning educational financing and the possible redeployment of military personnel back to the University City area.[10]

The board's 2002 decision to close two school buildings was not popular. But its decision to close another one was even less popular, in part because the second school closure was the second school reassignment in two years for about 45 elementary students (30 families). The vote to close a third elementary school, if enrollment did not increase, led critics to accuse the school board of poor long-range planning and a lack of vision. Because the board used small school size as a criteria to select which school to close, opponents of the plan accused the board of not understanding the importance of a "school community" for learning. Because the same neighborhoods had been threatened with school closure on both occasions, the board was accused of not understanding the importance of continuity for learning. Critics also charged that the board was "insensitive" to concerned parents and kids.

Criticism was not restricted to residents in areas where schools were to be closed because closing a school meant "redistricting" and reassigning children to different schools. Some affluent families were unhappy with this because they did not want their kids to go to school with poor kids. Parents of poor children also objected to redistricting because it was disruptive to their children's school life. For some, school reassignment meant that students who were accustomed to walking to school would now ride the bus, costing family time. People who lived nearest to the closed school saw school closure as another attack on their neighborhood and another reason for families to live elsewhere. They were the most vocal critics of school closures

[10] The vote to close the third school would be reversed in fall 2005.

because school closure meant the loss of an important neighborhood institution and the loss of its contribution to the neighborhood community. For many residents in the older neighborhoods, this was offensive.

Despite widespread criticism of the school board, the board and citizens agreed on one point. Both groups recognized the importance of the military in the community. Both groups understood that the movement of military personnel affected the price of housing, school funding and tax revenue. Both groups recognized that military deployment had a big impact on school budgets and the need for student space. Indeed, the 2004 closure was stalled because of rumors that a significant number of troops would soon be redeployed back to the community.[11]

Enough is Enough

By the fall of 2004, discontent with public officials had spread to include moderates as well as liberals and a group of people called for change. They asked a handful of their politically active peers to discuss how to change University City, the city commission, and the school board. Participants at the early meetings recognized that a local election was coming up and discussed the possibility of forming a political action committee (PAC). Upon registering the PAC with the state ethics committee, we learned that the University City PAC was the first local PAC in the county. There was only one other local PAC in the state, situated in Welksville (a town in a neighboring county). A group in Welksville had formed a PAC to support local candidates and had successfully elected progressive members to the city commission. The people of University City decided to model their PAC on the one in Welksville. Like their neighbors, the activists in University City decided to identify salient community issues so they could create

[11] As I write this, the rumor has proved more true than expected. To date, one of the schools closed in 2002 is expected to reopen in Fall 2007.

a broad base of community support, select candidates who supported their vision, and ask their members to campaign for the identified candidates and help them win political office.

People for a Progressive University City

The first official meeting of the PAC was in November 2004 at a local, Protestant, non-fundamentalist church. The founders of the PAC understood that it was important to attract a broad base of citizens for this first meeting. They therefore asked a diverse group of friends, acquaintances, liberals, moderates, Libertarians, Republicans, activists, Democrats, politicians and business people to join the group. The group included representatives from neighborhood associations, parent organizations, and social justice groups. The founders thus made a conscious effort to include people from across the community. The "meeting at the church" had two objectives. The first objective was to demonstrate that discontent with the city commission was widespread. The second objective was to identify the causes of discontent. In other words, the founders wanted to know what issues animated other segments of the community and whether they would support a campaign to elect new government officials.

About 30 people attended the first meeting at the church, which confirmed that discontent was not isolated in the liberal-left-leaning segment of the community. This meeting also produced a name for the organization, a list of community issues, and a steering committee. The group filed for status as a PAC with the Red State Election Commission about four months prior to the next election. Participants agreed to call themselves "People for a Progressive University City" (PPUC).[12] The group's jurisdiction was restricted to the city limits of the town and the boundaries of the school district.

[12] Of course, this is pseudonym for the name of the organization. From here forward I refer to the group as PPUC.

The mission of the group was to elect candidates who held a "progressive" vision of the community. In order to arrive at a consensus as to what a "progressive" vision was, group members were asked to discuss: 1) what they hoped for the future of University City; 2) how they imagined the city moving forward; 3) what challenges they saw for the community; and 4) what kind of commissioners they wanted to elect. In the course of the discussion, the group generated a list of eleven community issues, including wages. The list was eventually reduced to six issues: 1) neighborhoods and affordable housing; 2) economic development and wages; 3) social service funding; 4) quality schools and school/city cooperation; 5) the role of local government; and 6) tolerance and diversity. The resulting list reflected the meetings diversity. Several members of the living wage group were in attendance and offered support for the economic development and wages issue. Likewise, members of the neighborhood groups offered support for neighborhood issues, and members of parent organizations offered support for the "quality of education" issue.

Another outcome of the November meeting at the church was the formation of a steering committee. Participation in the steering committee was voluntary. Everyone who expressed an interest in serving as a member of the steering committee was invited to participate (including myself and two other members of the living wage group). Not everyone who was nominated to the steering committee chose to participate. While, as will later see, the role of the living-wage group was to be a contented issue for the PPUC, the composition of the steering committee was not pre-determined. Nevertheless, several people who attended the "meeting at the church" had previously met to discuss the potential to form a PAC. Two individuals (one of whom was a member of the living-wage group) agreed to serve as co-chairs, one man and one woman. The task of the steering committee was to organize the activities, communications, and other details

of the group. The steering committee met a few days later at a member's home. The committee included four men and four women, including the co-chairs. In addition the three members of the living wage group, the steering committee also included people who were local business owners, neighborhood leaders, a PTO (Parent Teacher Organization) president, current and retired university faculty. Politically, the group was diverse, its members holding memberships in Democratic, Socialist, Libertarian and Republican organizations. As noted, I served as a representative of the local living wage coalition. I also contributed my experience as an activist and organizer, parent, protester, student and neighborhood leader. I had connections to religious and neighborhood organizations and to the living wage membership. Racially, the group was all white. In terms of economic status, the steering committee was economically stable. It included a retired professor, current university faculty, an attorney, a stay at home mom, a business owner and me, a graduate student.

The committee decided that its first tasks were to draft a platform and organize a kick-off event. Using the list of "issues and concerns" identified at the meeting at the church in November, the steering committee framed a six-point issue platform – the "principles." The platform was designed to describe the organization's objectives in a way that could attract widespread community support. The committee assumed that the platform would be crucial to attracting supporters. The group hoped to use the platform as a way to signal that the organization was concerned with diverse issues and thus attract supporters who agreed with at least one of the principles. The framers assumed that not all people would be concerned about economic development or intergovernmental cooperation, for instance, but they hoped they would be concerned about the neighborhoods or social services funding and participate in the organization anyway.

For the “campaign kick off event,” the committee decided to hold a chili supper in late January, 2005, at a central and neutral location. A local business owner provided chili, drinks, and paper goods, while the steering committee provided the desserts. The committee distributed invitations to friends, neighbors and fellow activists across the community. Invitations were posted on websites and people passed them out to friends at work, school, and church. Announcements were also posted on community bulletin boards, listservs, in coffee shops, and in newspapers. The announcement invited people to come learn how they could help “change the direction of our local government” (see appendix A).

The chili supper was a festive occasion, with adults and children in attendance. The turnout was larger than expected. Although the steering committee planned for 100 people, twice as many came. The group jammed the building to capacity and food almost ran out. The line to sign in stretched around the room and people waited nearly 30-minutes to get food. It energized people and gave them hope that they could work together to create change.

The chili supper was both a party and a meeting. The first item on the agenda was to introduce the PPUC to the community. Second, the speakers described how the PAC would select candidates to support in the upcoming election and they introduced the principles, which had been framed by the steering committee. They then invited people to participate in the campaign process. Finally, they answered questions from the audience. One person asked if the group was going to interview incumbents or consider supporting them. Others wanted to know if the group supported a living wage. Although the steering committee had talked about these issues in advance, the committee was not able to answer them in ways that all the people at the meeting could agree with. Reporters from the *University City Press* who were at the meeting took advantage of this lack of preparation and ran a front-page story the following day. The press

made note of the fact that the PPUC was not going to interview incumbents. Though that decision was later reversed, it became known as the "Longfellow incident" because Longfellow was the incumbent commissioner in question. These mistakes required some damage control.

Choosing Candidates

Following the model of the PAC in Welksville, the PPUC selected its candidates after a formal vetting process. Candidates were invited to be interviewed by PPUC and, based on their responses to the interview questions, received a score and rank. Those with the highest scores were invited to accept PAC support. The steering committee conducted interviews with the candidates at the public library. Interview questions were written in advance by the steering committee and designed to reflect the group's principles. One set of questions was drafted for city commission candidates and another set for school board candidates. In order to control for bias, one person asked the candidates the series of questions, while others took notes. The audience was not allowed to ask the candidates questions during the formal interview process. But they did ask questions after the formal interview was finished. Interview notes were then transcribed and shared with members on the PPUC listserv.

After interviewing all the candidates, steering committee members scored their response based on the extent to which each candidate was able to address the questions and the degree to which they demonstrated support for the six-point platform. The three candidates per race with the highest cumulative scores were recommended to the membership at a general meeting. Though elect-ability was not one of the principles, it was part of the consideration for endorsing candidates. For instance, committee members considered the candidate's potential ability to respond to questions during public forums and from constituents. There were not points given for elect-ability per se, but elect-ability contributed to the way steering committee members scored

candidate responses. Indeed, one candidate whose interview responses were inline with the PPUC principles was given only token consideration for endorsement because he was considered un-elect-able since his responses did not reflect a thorough understanding of community issues. It was decided that to extend support to an unlikely candidate would have been futile.

After the steering committee settled on which candidates to endorse, they invited the group's membership to comment on the recommendations. Despite efforts to get members to attend a general meeting, only a very small group of people -- about twenty -- came to hear the steering committee's recommendations. Members then voted on the three candidates they liked best for each race. The steering committee's recommended slate was approved.

Supporting Candidates

Each of the selected candidates accepted the general support of the PPUC, though not all the candidates accepted financial support. City commission candidates were offered financial support for both the primary and general elections. One commission candidate accepted financial support only for the primary race. School board candidates were offered financial support only for the general race. One school board candidate decided not to accept any financial support from the PAC. All candidates accepted organizational support, which included organized literature drops, yard sign distribution, and radio and newspaper ads.

After the candidates had been selected, the steering committee organized a yard sign distribution, "stuffing parties," and literature drops. The steering committee organized several yard sign distribution centers, where people could pick up yard signs before the election and return them after the election.

Eight people filed for the city commission race, which prompted a February primary election to limit the field to six candidates. To help PPUC candidates get through the primary,

PPUC hosted a literature-stuffing party and dropped literature at more than 3,000 homes in University City. The three PPUC candidates were the three top vote-getters. A second literature drop, after the primary, also included information about school board candidates. The second literature drop stretched outside the city limits to include households served by the school district. Literature packets also included information about the candidates and about PPUC. The PPUC information card articulated the group's mission, its principles, and contact information, and included a perforated section listing PPUC-supported candidates, which voters could tear off and take with them to the polls.

In addition to interviewing candidates, distributing yard signs and literature, PPUC also hosted a candidate forum and invited all the candidates for city commission. The forum was held at the public library. The PPUC was the only group to host a candidate forum prior to the primary election. The PPUC also organized an Election Day "get out the vote phone bank," using both volunteer and paid student callers. Phone bank callers used lists provided by neighborhood organizations, social justice groups, churches and schools.

Because there was no formal membership process, it is difficult to say how large the group was or how many people counted themselves as members. Some people participated in the organization by making financial contributions, while others dropped literature and displayed yard signs. Still others attended meetings, educated themselves on the issues, and voted for PPUC candidates. Taking into account only people who volunteered for the organization, signed up for the listserv, and/or contributed financially, the core membership was probably about 200 people. This number does not include the people who did not participate in the organizing but voted for PPUC candidates.

In the general election, four of the six supported candidates won their bid for public office, two in the city commission race, and two in the school board race. Indeed, the top vote-getter in each race was a PPUC candidate. However, incumbents in both races also won. In the city commission race, the top vote-getter was a PPUC-supported candidate, while the second highest vote-getter was the incumbent. The third vote getter was a PPUC-supported candidate, followed by another PPUC-supported candidate by only 14 votes. This narrow margin means that it is likely that if the third PPUC candidate had won, the other PPUC candidate would have lost.

Community Reaction

The public response to the PAC was mixed. Although the turnout to the chili supper was considered extraordinary, very few people attended subsequent meetings. A handful of citizens wrote letters to the editor of the *University City Press* about the PAC. PAC supporters said progressive change was good for University City, while critics accused organizers of "telling people who to vote for." The media response was mixed. On one hand, the local papers covered its activities, mentioning it more than a dozen times between January and April 2005. The University City Press and Red State University News reported on the organization's meetings and candidate forum, while the University City Libertarian newspaper asserted that the PAC was a liberal, "communist" group backed by the local chapter of the World Peace and Fairness Coalition (WPFC)[13]

Many people in the community viewed the PAC as having a left-leaning agenda supported by left-leaning organizations. Such an organization would not be readily embraced in a community that has nearly two times the number of registered Republicans as Democrats, a

[13] The University City News is a six-day-a-week community paper. Red State University News is a week-day student paper. The University City Libertarian is a weekly community paper.

bedroom community to a military post, and host to a land grant university and a Christian college. A progressive grassroots organization would not expect to be well received in a politically moderate town, situated in an otherwise "Red State." Given the political leaning of University City, it is not the kind of place one would have expected a progressive, social justice and quality of life movement to have emerged, let alone have been successful. Yet, such a movement did emerge in University City and was able to secure some community support and achieve some important political victories, including two city commission seats and two seats on the school board.

The Research Question and Why it is Important

As a past and present member of the steering committee, I have a particular interest in understanding what conditions enabled the formation of PPUC in the winter of 2005. What role did the leadership and various social networks play in mobilizing volunteers and turning out voters? What issues were salient to participants in the PAC and to voters in the community? How important were the principles to its organizational and political success? Social movement scholars have argued that the most important question for scholars is *why* social movements *emerge* (Goodwin and Jasper 2003, McAdam, McCarthy and Zald 1996). I have asked this question about the PPUC in University City. By understanding why social movements form and what conditions enable their emergence, researchers can promote social change by empowering organizing and activists with information about the formation of organizations like the PPUC. Researchers can promote social change through scholarship about social movements that is useful and accurate. Practical knowledge about what enables social movements to form is useful to organizers "on the ground" who use it to mobilize and organize people in order to create

change. Of course, I am also interested in the group's success. I wonder if people thought the group was successful and how it might be more successful in the future.

Because my intention is to produce knowledge that is useful to the PPUC and other organizations and knowledge that promotes social change, I have taken an Action Research approach to understanding why the PPUC formed in the winter of 2005. Action Research is an ideal method because it links knowledge with social action and social change (Rayna 1975, Shulamit 1992, Cancian 1992). It is also an appropriate method for this project because it allows researchers to be participants in the organizations they are examining (Weiss 1998).

Resource Mobilization theory predicts that social movements emerge when organization leaders have the resources necessary to skillfully mobilize groups of discontented people. The Political Opportunities theory, on the other hand, suggests that movements emerge because political conditions are favorable to their success. The Framing perspective suggests that movements emerge because organizers articulate social problems and solutions in a way that resonates with potential supporters.

The Chapters Ahead

In the next chapters, I first review the relevant social movement literature and consider how Resource Mobilization theory, Political Opportunities theory, and the Framing perspective might be used to explain the emergence of PPUC during the winter of 2005. In chapter three, *Using Research to Promote Progressive Social Change,* I describe Action Research in detail. I also describe the sample design, the sample, method of data analysis, and my observations as participant-researcher. Chapters four through ten summarize respondents' observations about the PPUC. In chapter four, *The PPUC Came Together Because Discontent was Widespread,* I describe the nature and extent of community discontent that respondents say motivated the

formation of the PPUC. This chapter suggests that discontent was not limited to the left-leaning liberals but also included political moderates. In chapter five, *They Were There, so it Must Have Been Their Idea,* I describe why respondents speculated that the living wage group was behind the formation of the PPUC. In this chapter, respondents suggest that the presence of certain individuals at PPUC meetings led them to assume that they were behind the group's formation. In chapter six, *The PPUC Set Out to Bring People Together,* respondents tell how the group built a coalition of discontented people in hopes of affecting the local election, how the group set out to bring both moderates and liberals together. In chapter seven, *The PPUC did Good Because They Educated and Turned out the Voters,* respondents suggest that the best thing that the PPUC did was to create a system that kept the people informed and educated about the issues. They said that a strength of the PPUC was that it kept attention on the issues and promoted the election. Chapter eight, titled *The PPUC was too Broad to do Much Good,* suggests that the PPUC's greatest weakness was that it tried to be too inclusive. Respondents noted that the PPUC's platform included the living wage, which kept some political moderates from participating in the organization. They suggested that the group could have attracted moderate support if that position had been eliminated. In contrast, others who liked the living-wage idea thought the group was too watered down. In chapter nine, *For Good or bad, the Principles Gave the PPUC an Identity,* I outline what respondents thought about the organizational platform. Respondents said that the principles clearly defined what the group stood. While some thought that the principle on wages should have been eliminated from the platform, others supported its inclusion in the platform. The tenth chapter, *The Future of the PPUC,* describes what respondents thought about the future of the organization. Most respondents thought it should remain active, at least for election purposes. Respondents also suggested ways that the organization could improve.

Finally, in chapter eleven, *Theoretical and Practical Implications*, I argue that the story of the PPUC suggests that social movement formation is not as simple a process as Resource Mobilization, Political Opportunity theory or the Framing perspective suggest. In this chapter, I also discuss what organizers in University City and other social movements can learn from the PPUC. I conclude the chapter by answering the question, why did the PPUC form in University City in the winter of 2005.

CHAPTER 2 - A Review of the Social Movement Literature

This research project draws on three theories of social movements: Resource Mobilization theory; Political Opportunity theory; and the Framing perspective. Each theory emphasizes different factors to explain the emergence of social movements. Resource Mobilization theory conceptualizes movements as organizations that use human and economic resources to promote social change (Barkan 1979, McCarthy and Zald 1977). The Political Opportunity theory emphasizes the role of the political environment in which movements emerge (Goodwin, Jaspers and Jaswin 1999, Tarrow 1996). The Framing perspective takes into account the role of culture and meaning for movement participants in the emergence of social movements (Benford and Snow 2000, Gamson and Modigliani 1989). Resource Mobilization theory and Political Opportunity theory dominated the social movement literature in the 1970s and 1980s. By contrast, the Framing perspective or "*new* social movement theory," emerged in the early 1990s, largely in response to the neglect of culture and social meaning by Resource Mobilization and Political Opportunity theories (McAdam and Snow 1996).

Generally, scholars have found these theories to be fairly compatible with each other. Valocchi (1993) combined Resource Mobilization and Political Opportunity theory to explain the emergence, development, and decline of unemployment councils during the 1930s. In 1999, Morris wrote that the civil rights movement in the South depended as much on mobilizing human resources as in taking advantage of political opportunities. Reese (1996) combined Resource Mobilization and Political Opportunity theories to explain the development of state subsidized childcare services in post World War II California.

McCammon, Campbell, Granberg, and Mowery (2001) combined all three theories to explain the success of state suffrage campaigns prior to the passage of the 19th amendment, as did Gotham (1999), in explaining social change and the emergence of an anti-expressway movement in Kansas City, Kansas, during the 1960-70s.

Resource Mobilization Theory

Resource Mobilization theory, which dominated social movement research during the 1980s, emphasized the importance of organizational structure, communication networks, and social solidarity in the emergence of social movements (McCarthy and Zald 1973, Evans 1980, McAdam 1982, Morris 1981). The fundamental tenet of Resource Mobilization theory is that social movements emerge when protest groups are well organized and able to mobilize resources and people (McAdam 1997). McAdam argued that social movements are most effective as "organizations" when they have a formal structure and clear identity. Movements also need resources such as money, leadership skills, and social networks if they are to be successful at mobilization and satisfying grievances (McAdam 1997). Latent social solidarity (i.e. friendship) is useful for promoting mobilization and collective behavior among social groups and between individuals (Walsh and Warland 1983). "Trigger events" are important because they bring attention to grievances, discontent, and social conditions while promoting solidarity and mobilization. "Trigger" events are public, sometimes dramatic, events that draw attention to a social issue (Rubin and Rubin 2001). Resource Mobilization theory assumes that grievances and discontent are necessary, though not sufficient, conditions for the emergence of a social movement.

In sum, social movements emerge when individuals who have the skills and connections motivate people in the name of a shared grievance. Leaders draw attention to shared grievances,

while promoting collective behavior among discontented people in order to produce social change (McCarthy and Zald 1977). Social movements emerge when discontented people, who have access to social networks and leadership skills, motivate others to participate in collective action in the name of a shared discontent. Social movement organizations also need money. Money allows movement organizations to support staff, to buy contact lists, and wage public relations campaigns (Staggenborg 1988). For instance, the survival of the NAACP between 1960-1973, a time of waning public interest, was due to the fact that the organization was able to hire staff (Marger 1984).

In 1981, Morris wrote that the success of the civil rights movement in the Jim Crow South was attributed to the extensive social networks between churches (Morris 1981). Churches provided communication networks, while ministers provided movement leaders. Resource Mobilization theory has also been used to explain the rise of the Christian Right. Wilcox (1988) observed that Christian organizations were ideal networks for building a base and for filling the campaign coffers of socially conservative PACs during the 1980s. Tierney (1982) used Resource Mobilization theory to explain the increasing attention given to the problem of battered women. She concluded that the issue became more salient, in part, because of ties between organizations that supported battery survivors.

Resource Mobilization theory highlights how movements mobilize, how they bring people together, and how they organize and develop an effective division of labor. It draws attention to the *how to* of moving resources and launching protests (Jenkins and Perrow 1977).

Critics of Resource Mobilization theory contend that it pays too much attention to the "economic language" of social movements and puts too much emphasis on the formal organization of movements as "industries," while giving too little attention to the political

context and issue frames (Goodwin and Jasper 1999, 2003,Tarrow 1998, McCarthy and Zald 1973). Indeed, some researchers have found that movements may be more dynamic and consequently more successful when they are *less* formally organized (McCammon 2003).

Resource Mobilization theory assumes that movement formation is a simple process whereby skilled individuals bring people together and inspire them to participate in organized activities. It assumes that good organization will lead to collective behavior, which will lead to social change. While the step-by-step account of social movement formation offered by Resource Mobilization theory is a useful perspective for explaining *how* social movement organizations form, it is an overly simplistic description of the process. As we will see, the formation of the PPUC was not as simple as bringing people together and organizing actions.

Political Opportunity Theory

According to Political Opportunity theory, social movements are political phenomena that emerge under specific political and social conditions (Noonan 1995, Almeida and Stearns 1998, Koopmans 1999, Tarrow 1994, Costain 1992, Tilly 1984). This approach assumes that "shifting alignments in the polity" affect the emergence, development, and impact of collective action (Tarrow 1988). Social movements emerge not because discontented groups have access to resources, but because they recognize an opportunity to mobilize people and redress their grievances (Almeida and Stearns 1998, Koopmans 1999). Political Opportunity theory recognizes that the characters of political structures vary across time, sometimes they are more "open" to the demands of social movements than at other times (Volocchi 1993). Systems are considered open when elites show signs of support for movement demands, or when disagreements among the elites are clear (Tarrow 1988). Political Opportunity theory assumes that political systems are inherently unstable in part because the election cycle makes the system

vulnerable to protest groups (McAdam and Snow 1997). Changing social, political, or economic conditions may further weaken political systems. System vulnerability gives relatively powerless groups opportunities to increase their bargaining power with the state (Tarrow 1994).

The key to explaining the emergence of a social movement, according to Political Opportunities theory, is the environment in which the social movement emerges. Within complex political environments, social movements may find opportunities for effective mobilization for resolving grievances. According to Political Opportunity theory, the social and political context is more important to movement emergence than resources. Movements will have different degrees of opportunity from one time to another because the political context is socially constructed and subject to changing social conditions and alliances (Koopmans 1999, Tarrow 1994). Political opportunities are part of the political structure, with some groups having more access, and others less (Koopmans 1999, Wisler and Giugni 1996). Individuals both inside and outside of any particular group affect what kind of access that group has to powerful institutions (Koopmans 1999). External allies are sympathetic supporters outside the social movement and potential participants. They are important because they have connections to groups outside the movement (Almeida and Stearns 1998, Meyers 1993, Tarrow 1996).

Political Opportunity theory assumes that protest groups recognize and take advantage of conflicts within the elite. For example, election cycles are moments when disagreement among elites can become visible. Protest groups may use elections as opportunities to gain access to political structures. Opportunities may also become visible when members of the elite make "sympathetic gestures" in support of a protest group, such as a proclamation or a dissenting vote (Meyers 1993, Tarrow 1994). Movements may also find opportunities for mobilization in the presence of other movements. Movements that arise first, or "early risers," demonstrate that the

political structure is vulnerable, which can subsequently encourage the emergence of other protest groups (Tarrow 1994).

In sum, Political Opportunity theory assumes that social movements emerge when protest groups recognize opportunities to gain access to power structures. Political opportunities are embedded in the political structure and become visible during periods of change or instability, such as an election cycle or periods of increasing discontent (Tarrow 1994).

Political Opportunity theory has been useful for explaining why some movements are successful and others are not. Political Opportunity theory has explained the relative success of labor unions, the passage of suffrage legislation, mobilization of the homeless, and the reduction in the number of hate crimes. Jenkins and Perrow (1977) compared the success of the United Farm Workers Union to the National Farm Labor Union and concluded that the difference between the two movements was that they emerged in different political environments. The success of the United Farm Workers Union can be attributed to the fact that it emerged in a more responsive political climate, compared to the era of the National Farm Labor Union. McCammon, Campbell, Granberg, and Mowley (2001) concluded that the success of state suffrage movements was as much a matter of a favorable political climate and good timing, as of the successful mobilization of suffragettes. They concluded that the first suffrage movement successes were in states where elites held progressive attitudes towards suffrage. Future movement successes were predicted by the successes in other states.

Snow, Soule, and Cress (2005) suggested that context was an important factor in predicting the mobilization of homeless people. They concluded that homeless people were more likely to participate in mobilization efforts in communities where limited affordable housing, high rates of poverty and unemployment made it difficult for families to secure housing.

Homeless people were less likely to participate in communities where there was with less poverty and unemployment. They concluded that grievous conditions provided opportunities for mobilization.

McVeigh, Welch, and Bjarnason (2003) found local context to be important for predicting collective behavior. They conceptualized the number of reported hate crimes as a measure of the collective response to a kind of social behavior. McVeigh et al. argued that a long-term decline in the number of reported hate crimes was related to an increase in the public attention given to the issue. More attention to hate crimes initially resulted in more awareness and more reporting. However, more attention and reporting, over time, led to a decline in hate crimes and fewer reports of hate crimes. Also, greater attention by police officers and public officials suggested that the political context was supportive of hate crime legislation. The support for hate crime legislation resulted in better enforcement of hate crime laws, which reduced the number of hate crimes.

The strength of Political Opportunities theory is its ability to answer the questions: "*why now?*" and "*why here?*" The theory accounts for time and space by noting that social movements emerge under conditions that are relative to both. The theory assumes that movements emerge when a change in the political context allows actors to recognize that collective action may provide them with access to political institutions. Further, greater access to political institutions may make resolution of social grievances more likely.

Critics of Political Opportunity theory argue that it does not explain why some groups protest and other groups do not (Noonan 1995). Goodwin and Jasper (1999) criticize the theory's "structural bias," and argue that it places too much emphasis on the character of the political structure while assuming movement organizers are able to predict the future. Others have

criticized the failure of Political Opportunity theory to account for the cultural meanings embedded in political and social contexts **(**Snow and Benford 1988, Walsh and Warland 1983**)**. They suggest that the theory ignores the fact that different groups give different meanings to social conditions and that meanings are important for promoting collective behavior.

Political Opportunity theory assumes that movements are opportunistic organizations that mobilize when they see an opportunity to satisfy their grievances. It assumes that movement organizers can predict the future and foresee the outcome of mobilizing the group. By explaining the formation of social movements in terms of timing, it offers an oversimplified explanation of mobilization. To be sure, part of the reason the PPUC formed was because of an upcoming election, which gave the organization an opportunity to promote its agenda. The story of the PPUC suggests that timing is indeed an important part of social movement formation. However, as we will see, when the PPUC took advantage of a political opportunity and mobilized people, it became vulnerable.

The Framing Perspective

The Framing perspective is a third paradigm that can be used to understand social movements (Benford and Snow 2000). The Framing perspective places meaning and culture at the center of explaining why social movements emerge. This perspective gives special attention to the *meanings* people give to their situations, circumstances, and solutions (Goffman 1974, Feldman 1995, Gamson 1992, Snow and Benford 1998, Smelser 1963).

According to the Framing perspective, elites, social movement organizations, and the media are "issue framers," groups that describe social grievances and solutions (Stone 2001, Snow et al. 1996, Entman 1993, Gamson 1992). Issue framers compete with each other to promote their view of social issues and the solutions they support (Snow and Benford 1988).

Issue framers promote a particular definition of a social issue or movement while discounting the definition provided by other groups. The purpose of issue frames is to motivate individuals to participate in the actions promoted by one group, and discourage them from participating in actions promoted by other groups. Issue framers promote frames that will encourage individual behaviors in support of their group's goals (Snow et al. 1986; Entman 1993).

Frames are actively constructed by "select[ing] some aspects of a perceived reality and mak[ing] them more salient" [than others]. Frame construction is the "signifying work" of social movements that motivates and mobilizes collective action (Goffman 1974: 21). The Framing perspective assumes that social movements emerge when meanings are linked with organizations, and organizations are linked with collective actions (Snow, Rochford, Worden and Benford 1986, McAdam, McCarthy and Zald 1996). Framing is the essential activity of social movement organizations (Snow et al. 1986). In order to motivate people to act collectively, they must be moved by an issue, and for this to occur, the issue must be framed in accordance with their value system (Snow et al. 1986; McAdam and Snow 1997).

Successful frames define situations as mutable and unjust, while resonating with the lived experiences of potential adherents (Piven and Coward 1979, McAdam et al. 1996:5). Frames attract adherents by giving problems a definition and solution that the adherent finds reasonable (Entman 1993). Some frames attract supporters while other frames discourage people from participating.

In their examination of issue frames and the Ku Klux Klan (KKK), McVeigh, Myers, and Sikkink concluded, "a movement may construct a frame that attracts members in one context but fails to do so in another" (2004: 3). They noted that frames may alienate individual supporters and otherwise sympathetic elites. They also noted that political candidates who might have

supported the KKK rejected the group after calculating that support from the KKK would not offset the backlash from other groups. As McVeigh et al. argued, “Ideally a social movement should develop a frame that recruits active members and builds solidarity among them without generating a significant backlash in the wider population” (2004:3).

Gamson and Modigliani (1989), proponents of the Framing perspective, contend that issues do not exist in a time and space vacuum. Rather, they claim that issues have “cultures,” histories of public discourse that highlight specific aspects of the issue, while discounting others. Issue cultures are dynamic. They develop and change over time. Gamson and Modigliani found the concept of issue cultures useful in explaining changing attitudes towards nuclear power. They concluded that the media is the organization that most shapes public opinion about nuclear power and considered how different media outlets constructed different nuclear power frames, how those frames changed over time, and how public opinion changed accordingly (Gamson and Modigliani 1989).

The strength of the Framing perspective is that it recognizes that different social problems have different meanings for the people who experience them, who may be otherwise sympathetic to them, as well as to those relatively removed from them. The Framing perspective acknowledges the role that culture and meaning play in the emergence of social movements and that social movement organizations construct issue frames. The Framing perspective assumes that people will be motivated to support and/or participate in a social movement only when issues and their solutions are described in ways that are in line with their own experiences and belief systems.

Critics of the Framing perspective argue that it lacks “conceptual precision” and over emphasizes the role of “cultural dimensions” in social movement formation (McAdam et al.

1996). They claim that the perspective gives too much importance to the role of social meaning and culture, and does not account for why or how social movements bring people together, form coalitions, and promote social change (Tarrow 1998). Critics suggest that the Framing perspective ignores the processes of mobilization, while overemphasizing the role of culture and meaning construction.

The Framing perspective accounts for the intangibles that the Resource Mobilization and Political Opportunity theory do not. It acknowledges that social conditions may have a particular meaning to one person and a different meaning to another person. It describes social movement formation in a way that accounts for the "humanness" of human behavior instead of the procedural and opportunistic descriptions offered by the other perspectives. Though the Framing perspective alone cannot account for the formation of the social movements, as we will see in the story of the PPUC, framing was crucial to the formation of the PPUC because it gave the group a clear identity, which got the attention of both supporters and opponents.

Theory in the University City Context

Each of the theoretical perspectives suggests that we pay attention to different elements of the PPUC story. For instance, Resource Mobilization theory suggests that the PPUC emerged because the leaders knew many people and knew how to motivate them and that communication networks and friendships were useful for mobilizing people. The theory suggests that the group's emergence was related to successful fundraising because financial resources supported the promotion of the organization, which drew people to participate, who in turn helped the candidates win.

Political Opportunity theory suggests that we pay attention to the political environment and the fact that people were discontented with the city commission and the school board. It

assumes that the PPUC formed in the winter of 2005 because of the upcoming election and collective discontent. The theory also assumes that communication between protester and decision-maker was easy because the community is small, which made it easier to predict if a protest action would be successful in creating social change.

The Framing perspective suggests that we pay attention to the six-point platform. It assumes that the PPUC formed because framers articulated the issues in a way that resonated with a broad base of supporters, that the organization aligned itself with people's values who then joined the group.

At this point, all three theories seem to contribute to the explanation of the formation of the PPUC. As we will see, however, the story is more complex than any one of them assumes. In the next chapter, I describe how I collected data about PPUC, how it was analyzed and what I learned as a participant-researcher.

CHAPTER 3 - Using Research to Promote Progressive Social Change

The Evolution of my Role as Researcher

I have been the coordinator of the living wage group in University City since the spring of 2003. In this capacity, I attended the earliest meetings of the PPUC. I was part of the group that visited with the people of Welksville. I participated at the church meeting and voted for the principle on wages. I was a steering committee member and helped plan the events sponsored by the PPUC. In addition to my work with the living wage group and the PPUC, I was also a neighborhood organizer, in part because I am concerned about absentee landlords and the need for effective zoning regulations. In 2005, my family waited to see if the addition of military families to our neighborhood would offset the need to close my children's elementary school. Fortunately, it did. We would have been one of the families displaced by the second round of school closures. The issues that the PPUC took up were important to me and I had a personal interest in the group's success.

My very close association with the PPUC and the fact that I was a participant observer from the outset made an objective analysis of the organization impossible. However, as an Action Researcher (defined shortly) I could look at the organization in a way that accounts for my dual relationship as researcher and participant. An Action Research approach allowed me to analyze the organization for my own self-knowledge, for the well-being of the group, for other organizations in University City, and potentially, for organizations elsewhere.

Researching what people thought about the PPUC and what they thought the group did well, as well as where it failed, is useful for several reasons. First, it is useful to me because of

my other organizational roles. Second, the knowledge obtained here is useful to other organizations and organizers in University City in helping them avoid mistakes made by the PPUC and offering insights into what worked. Information learned here will certainly be useful to the PPUC as the organization looks toward the future and plans for the 2007 election cycle. Third, the knowledge gained from studying the PPUC, a progressive organization in a conservative place, could help and encourage other activists in similar contexts to promote social change in their communities. In this way, University City might be a model for protest group formation in other communities, just as the knowledge gained from Welksville encouraged the formation of the PPUC in University City.

Some scholars have argued that the best scholarship is scholarship that is incorporated with action; that scholarly knowledge should be linked to social action and social change (Rayna 1975, Reinharz 1992, Cancian 1992). Scholars introduced the term "Action Research" to describe a method whereby the researcher gathers information about a social organization in order to evaluate it and subsequently make modifications to it. Action Research is designed to link research with social action and organization change. (Lewin 1946, Susman and Evered 1978, Alderfer and Smith 1982). Sobo and Sadler (2002) used Action Research to examine a project intended to improve the morale among health care workers. They concluded that structures that promote employee-leadership communication encourage the expression of dissatisfaction and prompt organizational change. Selsky (1991) also used Action Research to examine the effectiveness of collaboration among 148 social organizations in Delaware. He concluded that the mobilization of a resource-exchange network promoted the development of community organizations by energizing organizations and making it possible for them to be more effective because they had access to the shared resources of other organizations.

Hallesleben, Osburn and Mumford (2006) also used Action Research to identify ways to reduce burn-out among federal fire fighters. They concluded that Action Research is part of a holistic approach to organizational change that can be tailored to specific organizational needs.

An Action Research design is an appropriate method for this project because it accounts for my dual role as researcher and participant. Action Research engages "researcher and participants for the purpose of studying their own organization" by generating knowledge that is useful to both subject and researcher (Weiss 1998: 100). As a method, it emphasizes the link between scholarship and social change. In this project, I have set out, both as a participant and a researcher, to generate knowledge about the PPUC, which I hope will promote social change by empowering the PPUC to be a stronger and more effective organization.

As I write this, the 2007 election cycle is underway and the PPUC is busy working for a new round of candidates. Where appropriate, I have used the information collected during my previous interviews to inform the 2007 version of the PPUC. While I have continued as a member of the steering committee, decisions made by the steering committee are made by consensus and/or depend on the willingness of individuals to follow through with tasks. Therefore, implementing the suggestions drawn from my research was not always possible.

The Questions

The project design uses qualitative data analysis to understand what developments made the formation of the PPUC possible. The project describes the specific conditions that led to the formation of a progressive social justice organization in an otherwise conservative place. In this spirit, I asked respondents seven specific questions about the PPUC: 1) *what is your perception of why the PPUC formed;* 2) *who was behind the organization's formation?; 3) what were the organization's goals?; 4) what were the organization's strengths?; 5) what were the*

*organization's weaknesses?; 6) what did you think about the principles?; 7)*and *what do you think about the group's future?* These questions were guided by the central research goal, which was to understand the conditions that led to the formation of the PPUC as a social movement, as described in the previous chapter.

The first question (What is your perception of why the PPUC formed?) invited respondents to discuss why they thought the PPUC formed. As we will see, some respondents said that the PPUC formed because people saw a chance to change the city commission and school board, as Political Opportunity theory suggests. Respondents might also have said that the PPUC formed because skilled people were able to motivate people to join the group, or that the PPUC's leaders were organized, as Resource Mobilization theory suggests. Respondents could also have said that the PPUC formed because people were attracted to the way the principles framed the organization, as suggested by the Framing perspective.

The second question (Who was behind the organization's formation?) invited respondents into a discussion about the organization's leaders. Respondents might have said that that the leaders had networks that were central to the organization's formation, as Resource Mobilization theory asserts. This question also invited respondents into a discussion about timing of the PPUC's formation relative to the upcoming election.

The third question (What were the organization's goals?) invited respondents to describe and asses the PPUC's goals. Respondents might have said that the organization formed to take advantage of the upcoming election, as assumed by Political Opportunity theory. They might also have said that the PPUC intended to build a larger organization that could be mobilized for other purposes, as Resource Mobilization theory would suggest. Respondents might also have

said that the PPUC wanted to reframe the way people thought about good government in University City.

The four and fifth questions (What were the organization's strengths? and What were the organization's weaknesses?) invited respondents to compliment and criticize the organization. While these questions are in line with an Action Research approach, they also invited respondents to speak to social movement theory. Respondents might have said, for instance, that the organization's strengths or weaknesses were related to raising money or mobilizing people, as Resource Mobilization theory would assume. Respondents might also have noted that the PPUC's platform included the living wage, which was considered liberal. Some respondents would have seen this as a strength, others as a weakness, as the Framing perspective suggests. Further, respondents might have said that the best thing the group did was bring people together during a time of discontent, which speaks to both Resource Mobilization theory and Political Opportunity theory.

The sixth question (What did you think about the principles?) invited respondents to talk about the principles both generally and specifically. In particular, it invited a discussion about the role of the principles in attracting people to the organization. This question also invited a conversation about each of the principles.

The seventh question (What do you think about the group's future?) invited respondents to contribute to a discussion of and planning for the future of the organization. While this question also has practical implications and is in line with an Action Research approach, it speaks to theory by suggesting that the organization's future has a different theoretical explanation than the organization's formation. Respondents might have suggested that the future of the organization depends on redefining the principles, as the Framing perspective suggests, or

they might have argued that the future depends on finding new leaders and people to participate, as Resource Mobilization assumes.

The Interviews

My interviews with respondents were guided by an interview schedule (see Appendix C). I piloted the interview schedule with an associate and fellow member of the steering committee. The pilot interview revealed that the schedule had redundancies, which were subsequently eliminated. For instance, the first question asked about the respondent's role in the community and a later question asked if the respondent had held public office. By the end of the second interview, I had memorized the basic questions and scarcely referred to the schedule at all. The interview schedule remained useful, however, because it helped me ensure that I had asked the key research questions.

I began each interview with a description of the project and the sampling design. I thanked the respondent for her/his contribution to the project and got their informed consent. Several respondents thanked *me* for the opportunity to talk about the organization and the community. After introducing the project, I asked respondents to give a brief biographical sketch of themselves and their relationship to the community. I asked about their occupation, any public offices they had held, and contributions they had made to the community. Generally, women spoke about their family and men about their career.

During the interview, I did not volunteer information about my role in the community unless I was asked about it. When asked about my relationship to the PPUC, I replied that I "was very close to the organization," though I did not specify my role in the organization's formation or the construction of its principles. The press had identified members of the steering committee,

listing all the steering committee member's names. However, the co-chairs and the treasurer were generally more well-known members of the organization than I was.

Although the respondents discussed the living wage in nearly every interview, no one asked me to describe my relationship to the living wage organization. Certainly, many respondents knew that I was the coordinator of the living wage group (because they too were members), though some did not know that I was the organization's coordinator. When it seemed appropriate, I disclosed information about my place in the community including where my children attended school, the fact that I was a neighborhood organizer, where my family attended church, and my husband's employment with the city. Although I limited my self-disclosure, I did not avoid it. After all, limited self-disclosure is characteristic of a good interview because it promotes rapport and a conversational character (Reinharz 1992 and Cancian 1992).

I guided the conversation to the topic of the PPUC and asked respondents to tell me about their impressions of the organization. For instance, what did they think about the goals of the organization? Who started it and why? Did they think it was successful? In answering these general questions, respondents offered criticisms, compliments, and suggestions for the organization. Conversations also included a discussion about the principles and the organization's future. Interviews covered topics such as the living wage, school closures and housing. Sometimes respondents talked about other people in the community, including decision-makers and activists. They often talked about past events that gave context to their answers, which helped me appreciate the history of social change and protest in University City.

I used probing questions to ensure that I explored similar topics related to the PPUC with all respondents. I did not ask probing questions about personal issues or political philosophy except in the specific context of University City. Sometimes respondents asked me my opinion

of the PPUC. I would answer these questions by saying that my opinion was informed by what I had learned in other interviews. If respondents asked about what other respondents had said, I would wait to the end and conclude the interview by reflecting on how the respondent's answers were similar or dissimilar to others. I also answered specific objective questions about the organization, such as how many people came to the chili supper or how the principles were decided on or who the group endorsed.

In addition to qualitative interview data, this project uses archival data from *The University City Press* and *The University City Libertarian.* The use of archrival data was primarily limited to constructing a timeline of community events but, where appropriate, I sometimes used it to elaborate on a respondent's observations.

The Sample

In the summer of 2006, I interviewed 31 residents of University City. We met in local coffee shops, at their places of work, their homes, and the local library. Interviews typically lasted about an hour, though one interview lasted three hours. All interviews were audio taped and later transcribed.

I invited respondents to participate in this project by email or phone. Nearly all respondents replied positively to the interview request. One respondent wanted to know "how they should prepare" for the interview. Several were concerned that they would not have much to contribute. Only one person declined my request, saying he "was not interested in giving the PPUC any feedback."[14] Another did not reply to multiple email requests. The positive response rate was 94%, with 31 respondents (out of 33 invited) agreeing to an interview. I framed invitations as a "request for your input on a dissertation project." I have since tried to contact

[14] This was a candidate who was not supported by the PPUC.

some of my respondents for other reasons and had much less success. The high favorable response rate may have been attributed to the fact that some respondents were my acquaintances or friends, though this was not true of all respondents.

I used a "convenience sample" design, starting with members of the steering committee and the candidates endorsed by the PPUC. I did not use a traditional convenience sample in which the researcher begins with first contacts, often on the margins or even on the outside the organization, and works inward. Rather, I used my role as an insider to generate a *strategic* sample *of* convenience, where I began with the people that were most convenient to me, people in leadership positions central to the organization and worked outward. I invited respondents to identify other people they thought I should interview by asking the question, "If you were asking the same questions I have asked you, who would you talk to?" at the end of each interview. This method worked well because respondents suggested that I talk to people I had not already considered. The sampling technique resulted in a potential respondent list that included nearly 100 names. Many of the names were mentioned several times. From the list, I decided who to ask for an interview by identifying the names of people who had been mentioned two or more times. The only exception to this rule was in my selection of minority respondents. Because so few names of minority people were mentioned, I did not require that their names be mentioned more than one time. Indeed the interview sample of 31 people included only two (6.5%) Black people. The remaining 29 (93.5%) were White.[15]

Demographic Data

There is a ceaseless flow of people moving in and out of University City because students who attend the university are transient and because military personnel are continuously being

[15] As of the 2000 Census the University City population was 87% white and 5% Black, all other racial groups made up the remaining 8% of the population.

deployed and redeployed from the post. This means that significant portions of the people who live in University City at any given time are relatively new to the community. Many people leave the community after earning a college degree or completing a tour of duty. I refer to the people who have lived in University City longer than the time it takes to earn a degree or to complete a tour of duty, as long-term residents. Long-term residents are people who have made the community their home for at least five or more 2-year local election cycles.

All respondents in the sample are long-term residents of University City. All but two of them have lived in University City for 20 or more years, the remaining two (7%) have lived in University City for more than 10 years but less than 20 years. One respondent described living in University City at a time when segregation was legal and blacks were denied entry to city facilities. He observed that today, some parts of the community remain segregated, despite efforts toward integration. Another respondent recalled living in University City during the 1950s, when families were dislocated for the construction of a dam and reservoir. She described how she learned from her parents that it was important to speak out to ensure that the interests of all members of the community were considered.

All but two respondents (7%) held at least one college degree and several held advanced degrees. Ten respondents (32%) held a current or previous faculty position at Red State University. *Some* economic diversity among the respondents was observed. Although the sample did not include anyone who might be considered poor by community standards, the sample did represent differences in economic security. For instance, the interview sample included businesses owners, unemployed people, and retired workers. I interviewed an executive of the chamber of commerce, a financial planner, book dealers, restaurant owners, a community consultant, attorneys, a disabled veteran, an unemployed graduate student, retired university

faculty, and homemakers. The majority of respondents (26 respondents or 84%) were financially secure, with obvious assets including a home or business, two (7%) of them were wealthy by community standards.

The majority of respondents (70%) were Democrat, but seven (23%) were registered Republicans. Of the seven, one had registered as a Republican so that she could vote in the Republican primary. One respondent identified himself as a Libertarian and another as a Socialist.

Seven (23%) respondents were previously or currently public officials of whom three were women. Two of the previous office holders had held an office at the state level, one at the city commission level and four had been or were members of the school board. One respondent had served three terms as city commissioner, for a total of 12 years. Another respondent had served three terms as a school board member, also totaling 12 years.

In University City, politically active people tend to participate in multiple organizations, myself included. This pattern, combined with the small community size, means that people are often recognizable by name. Indeed, all the respondents were considered, by community standards, to have name recognition. All the respondents held membership in other community organizations, including the League of Women Voters, the living-wage group, the Chamber of Commerce, and the Neighborhood Alliance. All had had significant community involvement prior to their experience with the PPUC. Some were recognized in social justice circles, others in business circles, some were active in their neighborhood associations and others in their children's school.

Gender

Gender played a subtle role in the story of the PPUC and in the data collection. Eighteen (58%) respondents were male, thirteen (41%) were female. Aside from the interview sample, the list of names generated was also disproportionately male. Towards the end of data collection, I began asking respondents specifically for names of women, only to hear several names already mentioned. Women mentioned their friends and acquaintances, men mentioned the names of women who were typical of male associates, such as business owners and elected officials.

The most striking gender difference was the timing with which men and women came to local politics. Women said that they did not get involved in local politics when they were younger because they had family obligations. They said that they only became involved in community organizations after their children were grown and in some cases when they had retired. They said that only then were they able to find the time and energy to participate in local political organizations. Men did not describe this pattern. Men made no mention of their family or jobs as being a barrier to their participation in local politics.

The delayed entrance into politics by the women in my sample meant that some of my female respondents were significantly older than me (I am 35). They had raised their children, retired from a career, and were now considered local activists. Among the interviews I remember most were the ones with women who had juggled care-giving, work, and community obligations to find time to talk with me. They had no obligation to me, in most cases they only knew my name, yet they generously gave me their time and attention.

In terms of the candidates, the PPUC endorsed one woman in each race. They endorsed the only woman running for school board and one of two women running for city commission. The decision to endorse the women candidates (or not) was based on how they responded to the interview questions, though there was some discussion about endorsing both women commission

candidates because women were underrepresented in local government. In the end, the group decided to endorse Patrick Turner, a male candidate, because the other female candidate was unable to answer the interview questions satisfactorily.

The steering committee was also gendered in that the women did most of the supportive tasks and the men held the leadership positions, including one co-chair and the treasurer. The other co-chair was a woman, who shared the spokesperson responsibilities with a man. While the male spokesperson was commended for his participation in the PPUC, the female spokesperson received the brunt of the criticism for the "Longfellow incident." The women reserved meeting rooms and wrote letters, while the men signed the letters and did the talking. Even the radio ads, which promoted the candidates supported by the PPUC, were done in a man's voice.

Rapport

Because I was acquainted with most of the respondents, establishing rapport was not a problem. I interviewed people I considered friends, people I went to church with, and people with whom I worked. My greatest challenge when interviewing friends and acquaintances was sticking to the topic of the interview because the conversation often shifted to other events in their lives. I learned quickly that respondents will tell you more than you ask. However, though the conversation may shift to a topic that did not seem immediately relevant to the subject of the PPUC, it was certainly relevant to understanding the respondent. Sometimes I felt uncomfortable guiding the conversation back to the PPUC, away from the topic of the respondent's life, because I feared I was communicating that I was not interested in hearing her or his stories. In the course of the 31 interviews, I came to appreciate the gift each respondent gave me in terms of time, energy, and self.

Although I had had prior personal interactions with all but two respondents, I felt that the easiest interviews were with people with whom I shared political views. These interviews were easier than the others in part because we tended to know each other better and because we shared a worldview and a political philosophy and our perspective on local politics. They were easier conversations because the respondent did not say things that I disagreed with. It was more difficult to conduct interviews with people who held different political ideas. These interviews were more difficult for the same reasons that interviews with my friends were easier. I did not know the respondents as well and they were more likely to express viewpoints that I disagreed with. Though these interviews were challenging, they were extremely useful because these respondents differed so much from others in the sample.

My challenge in all the interviews was to avoid contaminating the interview by making my agreement or disagreement apparent. I was also challenged not to take criticisms of the PPUC or the living-wage group personally, and to avoid my compulsion to justify or defend the actions of the PPUC.

Being a Participant-Researcher

I enjoyed collecting the interview data. I was surprised at the positive responses to my interview requests. Although I assumed people wanted to help me with my dissertation project, I later realized that people enjoyed talking about themselves, their community service, and the PPUC. Respondents liked to talk about local politics. Some thanked me for my work as an activist and researcher. They said that they appreciated the practical nature of this project. Several respondents have asked to see my results, which I intend to share with them at the appropriate time.

What I learned in the interviews has affected my perspective of the community and of many of my acquaintances. I have a deeper understanding of both community history and the contemporary context. In addition, I understand more about the interpersonal dynamics of politics in University City. I often reflect on my conversations with respondents while going about my everyday business in the community. Sometimes I recall what I learned in an interview and use it to make sense of current community issues, such as redevelopment, population growth, and school redistricting.

Since the interviews, I have reflected on the importance of confidentiality, both specifically and generally. Not only is confidentiality important for a researcher, it is also good for politics, both local and personal. In terms of local politics, confidentiality is important because it protects people from the damage that sharing unnecessary information can cause. In other words, it is important to practice confidentiality so as not to share information about another person that is false or derogatory and/or not intended for public distribution. If a person is known to spread false or misleading information, then people will hesitate to share information with her or him. Also, if a person is known to tell information that is false, people will not listen to her or him and not believe what she or he says. Confidentiality in interpersonal politics (such as between friends, neighbors or co-workers) is much the same, though what is at stake are personal feelings and friendships.

I was surprised how often people said hurtful things about others. Respondents were willing to deny other people their right to participate in community events because they disagreed with them or disagreed with their approach to community action. Respondents made contradictory statements suggesting that they both respected someone but were also intolerant of them. Even worse, they were willing to say these things on tape.

I enjoyed learning about people's political views. I found it especially interesting to hear how people create complex belief systems in order to make their beliefs seem coherent. For instance, one respondent claimed to support public education, yet sent his children to private school. I also had occasion to wonder why people held such contempt for words that reflected the needs of poor people, like "affordable" and "poverty," unless, maybe, it served their own interests to ignore the needs of the poor and advocate for the privileged.

Prior to this project, I knew that the living wage was a controversial issue. But I did not have a sense of how controversial it was. Nor did I understand the historical evolution of the controversy in University City, which I came to understand during the interviews. I learned that people's negative feeling about an issue (like the living wage) may out-weigh their equally positive attitudes about other, associated issues (like quality education). Many people are one-issue thinkers, who support an organization because of one issue or who oppose an organization because they disagree with it on one issue.

Finally, I learned that when people work together they can make a difference and create social change. I also learned that it is hard work to find common ground when people have diverse experiences and perspectives. I have found that no organization can be all things to all people, but it is worth trying to bring as many people together as possible to work towards a common goal.

Analyzing the Data

I used the NUD*IST (Non-numerical Unstructured Data Indexing Searching and Theorizing) software to sort interview data according to theme. I coded the interview transcripts

into 50 themes or "non-hierarchal free nodes."[16] Then I grouped the appropriate free nodes to answer the research questions. For instance, in answering question one: *What is your perception of why the PPUC formed*? I used the responses coded "why group formed" and "general perception." I used "who was involved," "who invited you," "the living wage group was behind the PPUC," "PPCU leaders," "involvement in the PPUC," "I dropped out because" and "significant connections" to answer the second question: *Who was involved in the group's formation?* These categories included people's perceptions about who was included in the group, who had invited them to participate in the organization, and what role the leaders played in the group's formation. For the third question: *What were the group's goals?* I included data coded "goals of PPUC" and "expectations of the group." I included data coded as "what the group did well," "group successes," "how the PPUC helped candidates," "candidate interviews" and "chili dinner" to answer question four: *What did the group do well?* For question five: *What did the group do poorly?* I used data coded "group did poorly," "confusion," "living wage was a liability," "endorsements hurt candidates," "Longfellow incident" and "left leaning." To answer the sixth question: *What purpose did the principals serve?* I used data coded "principles", "principles were broad enough", "framing/wording" and "principle on wages." Finally, for the seventh question: *What are your thoughts on the group's future?* I used data coded "groups future," "pleased with election results," "group did well," "group did poorly," "PAC status," and "apathy." A few nodes were used across more than one question. Remaining free nodes were specific to the community, individual candidates or general political discussions and were not relevant for answering the question: why did the PPUC form in the winter of 2005.

[16] For a list of the "free nodes" and their description, see appendix D.

In the next several chapters, I present my findings. Accompanying nearly all respondent comments is the respondent's pseudonym. In the few cases where the pseudonym is not present, I have intentionally not included the respondent's alias in order to protect confidentiality because of the condemning nature of the comment or because including the respondent's alias would have made identification of the respondent possible.

CHAPTER 4 - The PPUC Came Together Because Discontent was Widespread

In the next six chapters I have summarized and organized respondents' comments in response to the specifying questions. I have organized respondents' comments so the reader can get a sense of the range of responses. Responses are limited to the question asked at the beginning of chapter. Chapter four summarizes responses to the broadest question, *Why did the PPUC form when it did,* while chapters five through ten summarize more specific questions.

Respondents said they joined because they were unhappy with specific commissioners and disliked their leadership style. They said that certain commissioners were rude to the public, to city staff and to each other. They identified three commissioners who they said had a narrow focus on the budget, were "unresponsive" to public input, and had their minds made up before they had ever listened to public input. Some respondents were offended by the commissioners' social agenda, and their blending of church and state. Others noted that dissatisfaction with the commission had grown over a period of years, beginning in the 1990s, with the battle over the placement of the Ten Commandments, the decision to remove the UN flag, the proclamation of Marriage Protection Week, and the proposal to eliminate funding for social service programs.

Discontent with the City Commission

Respondents suggested that the PPUC was formed to elect issue-based leaders. Harry Douglas, a member of the Red State University faculty and civic leader said, "I think this group [PPUC] was saying to the community, we need elected people who look at the big picture, look on each issue on its merits and its de-merits." Phillip Potts concurred with Douglas, saying that

he thought the PPUC was a centrist, issue-focused organization. “My impression was [that the] PPUC formed because folks in the middle simply felt disenfranchised and wanted people to focus on the issues and not on the politics of the issue, they wanted to find a centrist’s slant.”

Frank Burns, a long time resident of University City and a retired faculty member supported Douglas and Pott’s observations. But Frank thought that the formation of the PPUC was also a reaction to the unfriendly atmosphere and general tone of the commissioners. “I thought they [PPUC] were smart about getting people of good will to try and cooperate on something that would have an effect in the local community. They [PPUC] realized that there wasn’t a friendly attitude and positive feeling on the commission… I think there was clear resistance to the single-minded selfishness and one-sided viewpoint expressed by the city commission and its appointed boards.” Pamela Mathews, another long-time resident, said her observations of interactions between commissioners and city staff played a role. “Public scolding of the city manager by one commissioner was one thing I vehemently opposed. I just don’t hold with scolding individuals – talk to them privately … It [the city commission] was viewed as not progressive. Sometimes discourteous.”

Lou Thompson, a member of the steering committee, saw a link between the commission’s public behavior and their political philosophy. “I thought that our representatives on the city commission were so far to the right that they didn’t listen to anyone else… [they made] willy nilly decisions [despite] all of this public input and then our elected officials said ‘nuts to them’, we are going to do it our way.” Kurt Meyers, a local business leader, echoed Lou’s sentiment, and suggested that the PPUC was organized as a formal reaction to the religious tone of the commission and their unwillingness to listen to constituents. The PPUC was “a back-lash in terms of not allowing adequate discussion of issues at the city level. Lack of

communication, lack of acceptance of input … even the substance of the input itself. The commission had an attitude of 'We don't have to listen to anybody.' I found that offensive. There were also comments [in the community] about the religious tenor of some of the positions."

The overt religious tone of the commission caused consternation for many. Indeed, several respondents echoed Mr. Meyers' distaste for the blending of Christianity and government. Robert Cox, a local peace activist said, "I was pretty concerned about what I saw going on. When Tom Majors was put on the city commission he really crossed the line as far as I was concerned, the separation of church and state." Recall that when Tom Majors was sworn in as mayor, the Salvation Army led a public prayer. It was also under his leadership that each commission meeting began with prayer. Helen Adams, an economic justice activist, echoed the need to separate religion from politics, while noting that the same religious tenor was also evident at the level of state politics; "Religious values were not what should be driving people's decisions in the commission or for that matter school board. In Red State we have the issue of sex education [vs. abstinence only education] and [teaching] evolution [vs. intelligent design]. Certainly, Tom Majors' marriage proclamation … that was one thing that made a lot of people angry. That is just too much. Having a Mayor's "Christmas" parade and the proclamation of marriage got a lot of people very angry." [17]

Roger Wilson, a steering committee member agreed with Adams, " I was very fed up with the commission … I was fed up with one commissioner in particular for reading the declaration of marriage, you know whether gay or otherwise it [government] was the wrong place for it [the marriage proclamation]. I don't think that has any place in government and it really made me angry. That's not the kind of town I want to live in. That's not the kind of

[17]The mayor had instated a new parade between thanksgiving and Christmas. He had decided to call it the "Christmas Parade", instead of the more inclusive "Holiday Parade."

country I want to live in." Here, Roger echoed Helen's link between local politics and politics at the state and national levels.

Respondents expressed their distaste for Tom Majors specifically but they also found other commissioners troublesome. Sam Johnson observed discontent with city commissioners, "The PPUC formed because of four commissioners … and especially Tom Majors, when he started blending religion and politics together that became an alarming development to a great many of us."

Norman James agreed that the people of University City were fed up with the city commission's "reactionary politics." "With the city commission, of course it was because of the two conservative members Ed Brown and Tom Majors especially, and their reactionary politics over a period of ten years. That is really what spearheaded a lot of this discontent."

Matt Kent concurred with James, suggesting that the discontent prior to the 2005 election was a product of anger that had accumulated over a period of several years. "The Ten Commandments conflict, the conflict over the UN flag, the harsh rhetoric that seemed to devalue neighborhoods and diversity in the community … and not recognizing the voices of minority groups within the community. It's [the commissioner's] forcing a narrow agenda [on the community] and trying to frame the discussion in a way that does not reflect reality …the feeling that these things were happening more and more frequently … some of those kinds of things, I think, were coming to a head and the sense of frustration was building." Here, Kent summarizes many of the observations made by others, noting the Ten Commandments, the UN flag, the focus on a conservative agenda, and the sense of intolerance.

Discontent may have been a matter of disagreeing with the conservative commissioners about a particular issue, or it may be a matter of broader philosophical differences. Although

some respondents suggested that they were displeased with specific decisions of the commission, others disagreed with commissioners' philosophy of government as a whole. Monica Jones, a social service provider, described the city commission as indifferent to objective information. "Just the idea of how government functions and what government's role is, was vastly different [among the commissioners]. [Some thought that] there was never to be any growth in government. .. It does not matter that our city is going to add 30,000 [people] in the region; we shouldn't add any [city] staff positions. Government should be small. There should not be any growth in government."

Mike Downing, a long-time neighborhood activist, called this philosophy naïve, "The commissioners at that time [prior to the 2005 election] were very strongly anti-government and anti-tax, it seemed it was just a minimal view… that the city government needs to be as small as possible. That seems naïve, it seems very naïve."

Sam Johnson complained that commissioners were reluctant to "invest in the community," yet were willing to support big business. "With Ed Brown and Tom Majors, anything that required spending, they just voted 'no' … these commissioners were not willing to invest tax money into the city, but rather they were willing to give tax breaks to corporations that were coming. A great many of us were concerned about not getting a good return for the community, not only in the terms of social aspects but also in terms of economic aspects. Because the jobs they created [with economic development funds and tax breaks] were low pay or a kind of production that was not ecologically friendly."

Kurt Meyers said that the commission's emphasis on keeping the city budget small was a distraction from other community issues. "I think a lack of vision, by some elected officials [led to the formation of PPUC]. They [the commissioners] came to a very narrow focus; they seemed

to be one-issue candidates largely, primarily focused on the budget as opposed to creating a better community."

Patrick Turner, a local businessman, thought the commissioners prevented the community from reaching its full potential. "I didn't think we were reaching our potential as a community and that we were not being well served by some of the elected officials."

School activist Tina Brown shared Turner's concern that the commission was neglecting the community by focusing only on the budget. "I think the PPUC definitely arose to support candidates who had a broader view of the community. [Candidates] that were not single-issue candidates. They wanted candidates who supported a broader array of things, including housing and good jobs and transportation and neighborhoods and those things."

Wilma Barnes, neighborhood activist, summed it up nicely, "I think the reason [the PPUC formed] was because they were hoping to get more moderate, visionary people on the city commission."

Discontent with the School Board

Discontent with the local school board was at least as important for the formation of the PPUC as was discontent with city commissioners. What upset people most about the school board were its ongoing budgetary troubles and the subsequent school closures, which affected neighborhood and community morale. Helen Adams' discontent with the school board was related to the "… closing of Fred Edger and Greenway schools."

Roger Wilson said that one of the reasons he became interested in the PPUC was because it recognized that there was a relationship between school funding, school closures and the well-being of his neighborhood. "A big issue that just started to stir [the winter of 2004] and concerned me were the school issues here in town and the lack of funding. … We watched them

shut down Fred Edger School [in 2003], which I can see from my porch. I always thought my kids would go there… of course Southside School was on the chopping block right at the time [the PPUC was forming]."

Sara Miller, a school administrator, also noted the effect of school closures on neighborhoods. "I think it [the PPUC] happened because it was the second time around with the schools [closures]. I think they [PPUC] saw the impact of school closures on neighborhood morale and they knew that this time around, we could do something about it" (Sara Miller 209).

Phillip Potts described the PPUC's interest in the school board more simply, "In terms of the school board, it was about improving the schools."

Discontent and Motivation

Clearly, discontent was a motivating factor in the formation of the PPUC. As Kurt Meyers, business leader said, "discontent … is usually the most powerful influence."

Some respondents suggested that the group formed because discontent was coupled with an upcoming election. As Monica Jones argued, "It was simply dissatisfaction with the previous commission … the actions of two particular commissioners, both of whom would have been up for reelection in 2005... No one knew [at the time the PPUC formed] if they were going to run or not. This led a lot of citizens to say that this is not what we need in city government, we need a change. How are we going to bring about change? How much strength is needed to defeat two incumbents?"

Bob Long, a business executive, said that the community was ready for change. "We had just come off an extremely conservative, right-wing commission that really wasn't necessarily pro business. Its social agenda was apparent …The community was ready to swing the other way, there were lots of discussions [around town], none were as formalized as your group, but

there were lots of informal groups in the community that were really wanting a change in the direction of the city commission."

Sam Johnson concurred with Long, noting that the ideas about change came from different segments of the community. "There was a great deal of concern that the [city commissioners] didn't have a good grasp on the future and future trends, nor did they have good civic ethics, as opposed to religious morality... If you [citizens] see that lacking then you want to do something to change it … there were these concerns coming from a lot of different directions [in University City] that kind of peaked in the PPUC." Here, Johnson confirmed Long's observation that others in the community, outside the PPUC, were displeased with the city commission.

The PPUC used its early organizational meetings to confirm the presence of widespread discontent. Roger Wilson described one of the earliest PPUC meetings. "There was, at the initial meeting [at the church], an overwhelming feeling that the commission was too far right … we had a very open discussion about what people wanted [in terms of a city government]. Everyone in the room wanted something changed, they weren't happy with the current conditions. It is also important to note that at that point in time, three commissioners were up for reelection and we did not know if they were going to be running. Everyone was looking at this as an opportunity to replace those three." Here, Wilson noted that the election provided the group with an opportunity to make a change in local government.

Pamela Matthews, a neighborhood leader, thought that the PPUC leaders recognized that effective organization and citizen participation could bring change. "I think it was a reaction to the weak leadership and the realization by more and more people that you can fight city hall.

[The PPUC recognized] that citizen participation is both a good thing and it can bring about change."

Others agreed that the need for community organization was one of the reasons that the PPUC formed. Diane Knox, a steering committee member, thought that the PPUC managed to organize effectively. "There were other opportunities in past elections that just weren't organized well enough to really execute change." Marilyn Love, a long-time political activist, said that organization was seen as increasingly important. "We would have elected another round of conservative white males, had there been no input from us, a group like this [the PPUC] … the conservatives are organized." Here, Love suggested that without effective organization, like that possessed by the conservatives, University City would have elected more conservative white men.

Some respondents speculated that the PPUC had less-than-altruistic motivations. For instance, Wilma Barnes thought that the living-wage group took advantage of other people's discontent with the city commission. "I think they [the living-wage group] were wanting to ride the neighborhood coalition with this issue, thinking putting it together would be a win-win situation. That is my feeling … it could have come about from a lot of different angles, because there were a lot us that were upset with the city commission."

Simon Smith, a civic leader, thought that that PPUC organized to promote its *own* agenda, by organizing and endorsing PPUC-friendly candidates. "The PPUC was seen [by some people in the community] as a response to an election coming up and the need to advocate for candidates in an organized way, to seek change and get candidates elected. .. The PPUC worked to get the candidates they wanted elected."

Tom Collins, a steering committee member, described the motives of his colleagues on the committee:

> "I think Mr. Jones always wanted to see better people on the city commission, to further his agenda. He wants to see some things get done in the city and they can't get done unless somebody in a position of power – like a city commissioner - pushes them. Norman can't do it by himself. I suspect Helen is the same, and Roger is somewhat similar… Roger wanted to see some things happening on the city commission… Diane wanted to see something happen on the school board and I think she was a driving force in that arena … Those kinds of things [community organization] usually happen because a few activists get involved...Typically in a community, you find a few activists who keep a lot of things going. If it weren't for those people it wouldn't happen."

Some steering committee members were personally unhappy with the city commission. For Lou Thomson, this was the reason he got involved with the PPUC. "I was not happy with the climate of the people who were representing me on the city commission. Because of the displeasure I had with the activities and the votes they cast, I wanted to work with candidates who I believe in… I was so unhappy with them [the city commission] that's why I felt we needed to change direction of the city and I saw PPUC as an avenue to change the direction of the city, to get it back more to the center."

Helen Adams predicted that, as displeasure grew, groups like the PPUC would become more active political players. "I think [the PPUC formed because] there were enough people who were ticked off enough. I think that [organizations like the PPUC are] not unique to University City ... I think you will see more and more dissatisfaction [in the nation] and I think more and more new organizations [like the PPUC will] confront the power of the religious right. The traditional parties are not useful at confronting that [power of the right]."

Pat Farmer, a civil-rights activist, noted that organizing takes people with the right attitude. When asked why the PPUC formed prior to the 2005 election, she said "because nobody [else] had the courage to do it [before then."

Conclusion and Discussion

The PPUC formed in the winter of 2005 because "people were disgusted with our city commission and school board. Just disgusted" (Harriet Short). People were so disgusted that they took advantage of the upcoming election to organize the first local PAC. In order to be successful, the PAC would have to attract people from across the community. Fortunately for the PPUC, discontent was widespread. Activists were unhappy, which is common, but business leaders and many others in the community were also unhappy. Some people were unhappy because of the commissions' policies, others were unhappy because of the commissioner's behavior. People were unhappy with the school board for closing schools and failing to plan ahead.

Equally important to the formation of the PPUC was the fact that an election was coming up. Indeed, several respondents noted that the group came together for the specific purpose of influencing the upcoming election. It is illogical to assume that a group whose intention was to influence an election would have formed in the absence of an election.

All three theories of social movements (discussed in chapter two) stress the importance of discontent as a mobilizing force. Resource Mobilization assumes that discontent motivates people to organize resources including money, social networks, and leadership resources. Those who tell the story of the PPUC acknowledge the role of discontent. Indeed, discontent is central to their story. But respondents gave very little mention to money, social networks, or leadership. No one said that the PPUC organized because they had lots of money or because leaders knew

lots of people, or that the leaders knew how to motivate and mobilize people. Indeed, respondents primarily noted widespread unhappiness during an election cycle as the reason the PPUC formed. Nonetheless, the role of human and social resources in the formation of the PPUC should not be ignored. Steering committee members were not poor people; nor were they unknown people. The fact that the respondents did not mention their relative privilege does not mean that they were not privileged people. After all, the steering committee had enough human resources and social connections to turn out 200 people at the chili dinner and raise thousands of dollars for their candidates, which suggests that they had status in the community and the resources necessary for mobilization.

Political Opportunity theory assumes that movements emerge when they find opportunities for successful mobilization. The story of PPUC is not just about discontent. It is also a story about how people recognized widespread discontent and then took advantage of it to promote their agenda. By recognizing that dissatisfaction with the city commission and the school board extended beyond the usually progressive/liberal suspects, progressives saw an opportunity in the dissatisfaction of moderate people. Although respondents only hinted at this in this chapter, the PPUC emerged when a group of discontented activists realized they were not the only people who were unhappy with the city commission and the school board. The widespread discontent gave them the opportunity to promote change by mobilizing people for the upcoming election. By affecting the outcome of the election, progressives also hoped to promote their agendas, which included the living wage and neighborhood preservation.

The Framing perspective assumes that movements emerge when their agenda is framed in a favorable way. The Framing perspective would emphasize that the PPUC formed because people were unhappy with the city commission’s discourteous, conservative and narrow agenda,

which the commission framed as an acceptable politics. The formation of the PPUC was possible because it reframed acceptable politics as moderate and acceptable government as friendly and responsive; a view with which many in the community agreed.

In sum, respondents said little to suggest that the group formed because it had the resources necessary to mobilize people, including money and social connections. However, is it difficult to imagine how such a group could have come together and raise thousands of dollars in the absence of social connections to people with financial resources. This fact might be attributed to the fact that privileged people do not always recognize their own privilege. Though respondents said nothing about how the principles brought the group together, they did agree that the group formed because it offered a solution to the problem of a discourteous, right-wing, budget-cutting-focused commission. What respondents made very clear, however, was the power of discontent to mobilize people. They suggested that the PPUC formed because the upcoming election provided an opportunity for discontented people to mobilize in order to change the city commission and the school board.

In the next chapter, I will summarize who respondents said was behind the formation of the PPUC and who they thought initiated its organization.

CHAPTER 5 - They Were There so it Must Have Been Their Idea

By asking the second question, *Who was involved in the formation of People for a Progressive University City*, I invited respondents to tell me about who they thought was responsible for the formation of the organization. When they answered this question, respondents told me about their perception of the group, of individuals in the group and of other organizations in the community. They told me how they thought these individuals related to the group and how certain people affected the perception of the group and its agenda. Respondents said that the participation of some people made the group stronger because they gave the group credibility; while the participation of other people was bad because of their reputation or associations.

Their Philosophical Views

Respondents said that the PPUC shared a perspective of the community, that they wanted the same things for University City. They said that the PPUC was made up of people who were committed to making the community a better place to live and work. They were also friends. Matt Kent, a PPUC-supported candidate, said that the people who organized the formation of PPUC represented a "core group of people" who shared similar philosophical interests. "[The people of PPUC]… all share a commitment to the community, all value diversity, all value the neighborhood, all value social justice … [they] appear over and over again at different settings. Those people are the people who are truly invested in the community… they see the community as something they are committed to supporting."

Certainly, shared philosophical interests helped cement informal social ties and friendships. Pamela Mathews, a neighborhood leader, said she got involved with the PPUC

because of her friends, “I was involved because of some friend who had known of the success that Welksville had in influencing the election and I believed we should influence the election. I knew that we could [too], by promoting the issues and by educating and encouraging people to vote.”

Diana Knox, a member of the steering committee, was invited to join by an acquaintance. “I think it was right after Thanksgiving. Sam Johnson is the one who invited me, so I was somewhere around town, on the sidewalk, or in a restaurant or something. He said there is this group that is going to be meeting and you should come to the meeting.”

Others recalled similar, informal invitations. Tina Brown recalled being asked to join at the coffee shop, “probably right here in this coffee shop.”

Roger Wilson, a steering committee member, was invited to join the PPUC by his neighbor on behalf of someone else. “I was approached by Nancy Smith [a neighbor] at Norman’s bequest … I took two of his classes way back when. I often say if you had to take away my education and only allow me two classes I would keep his. I was approached only in that they were considering a group that wanted to focus on changing the make-up of the city commission. I was invited to attend an informational organizational meeting.”

Knowing people involved in the PPUC was important to participants. They liked knowing other people at the meetings because it gave them a sense of belonging. They also liked not knowing *everyone* at the meetings because it was a sign that other people were unhappy with the commission too. Mike Downing, a neighborhood leader, thought that knowing many of people at the PPUC meetings was good. “I don’t remember who invited me [to the meeting at the church]. It was obviously a group of well-known folks in the community who had been in public

service. At the same time, there were others there – I didn't feel totally out of place. I knew enough of them to be comfortable, and they knew me."

Others liked the fact they did not know everyone. Robert Cox, a peace activist recalled the chili supper: "There were lots of people at that particular meeting who I did not know and that sort of excited me. That was good."

The Role of Connections and Leadership

In order to turn people out to PPUC meetings and events the steering committee extended invitations to people they knew and asked others to do the same. As noted, the steering committee had connections to a variety of community organizations and people. Some respondents thought they had been invited to participate in the PPUC because their connections to organizations, while others thought they had been invited because or their relationships to other individuals. Wilma Barnes, a neighborhood leader, recalls her thoughts on the invitation she received, "I think it was sort of a blanket invitation. I presume I was invited because I was the chair of the [neighborhood] coalition."

Similarly, Pat Farmer, a civil rights leader, thought she was invited to a PPUC meeting because of her role in other organizations. "I have belonged to Habitat for Humanity for a long time. I have gone to meetings at city hall involving the minimum wage. [I was asked] if I would be interested in attending a meeting that would give us some ideas about stimulating the political process here, because we needed to do something."

Kurt Meyers, a business leader, speculated that he was invited to a PPUC meeting because he knew individuals who might be allies for the PPUC. "I'm not positive; it may have been political expediency or political advantage. I tend to be one that has lots of cross-over relationships of all different kinds, anything from business to social to political to athletic. I'm

involved in different things with lots of different people and lots of different kinds of friends and associates."

Others echoed Kurt's observation that certain social ties are more advantageous than others. For instance, Roger Wilson was considered an asset to the group because he was a prominent local businessman, lending it legitimacy. As Todd Collins explained, "To this day I don't know how Roger got into the mix. He was really really helpful. One of the problems the PPUC will have [in the future] is that they won't have a Roger. Roger lent some legitimacy that wouldn't have been there otherwise." Here, Collins is referring to the fact that Wilson decided not to participate in the PPUC after the 2005 election because of its apparent effect on his business.

Pamela Mathews agreed, "Roger was a brave leader because he was a businessman and he was willing to stick his neck out."

Some thought that Harriet Short was also an asset. Simon Smith, a civic leader, thought that her influence was related to her previous experience in the community. "She's a [former] elected representative. As an elected official she can speak in public and people will pay more attention to her because they know her. If you put someone else out front that is a new person, they will have to demonstrate that they know what they are talking about."

The Leftward Shift

Those who tell the story of the PPUC talk about how the group started out as a moderate group that included both Republicans and Democrats. But, over time, the group shifted to the left and the moderates dropped out. Respondents say the moderates dropped out because they perceived the organization as being left of center, which made them uncomfortable. Respondents said that the early public impression of the group was that it was a moderate organization,

drawing from a cross-section of the community. But as the group shifted left, they say it lost credibility. Harry Douglas, a civic leader, recalled his first impression of the organization at meeting at the church.

> "The People for a Progressive University City was a real cross section, they did a great job getting the opposite extremes there [at the church]. I don't know who all was putting that [meeting at the church] together, but I thought they did an excellent job at that meeting, of getting both sides of the aisle there … I thought that it was a pretty good meeting. At the church, you had Olivia Lang [a moderate Republican] who just came down from her Senate situation [and] to have Democrats [on one end] and Norman James [on the other end]…"

Harry, like others, noted that the group subsequently shifted left. "My impression [is that] the people who remained active … may have lean[ed] more to the left than I do, but they aren't necessarily extremists by any means, with the exception of maybe Norman [James]."

Bob Long, a business leader, echoed Harry's observations about the PPUC.

> "To be honest, when I initially heard about the group and saw some of the names that were associated I thought that there was a good cross-section of the community that had perhaps truly come together to build consensus. My further perception as time went on was that some people dropped out and then the group became more narrowly focused and it did not have a broad cross section of the community [any more]. There were people I would identify as moderates, maybe moderate Republicans [who] I think were looking for areas to build community consensus … even some Democrat folks who I think are not as extreme left as some people perceive. There was a good sprinkling of moderates in the group. Over time I [Bob Long] would hear that they had dropped out of the group… no one said [that they] dropped out for a specific reason. The perception in the community was that it became a much more narrowly focused group. People look at names that were involved in the group and they said [to themselves that] maybe I will be a little open to this. As people dropped out of the group it became more politically motivated and had a

real political agenda that was perceived as being more left and that the living wage group was behind it."

Kurt Meyers shared Long and Douglas's sentiment that the group was moderate at the beginning. Meyers expressed concern about the meeting at the church. "I was a little surprised at that one [meeting at the church], that it was as formal as it was. There was a pretty good cross-representation of the community. But on the other hand, the controlling influences seemed to be … predetermined."

Phillip Potts, a candidate supported by the PPUC, described his impression of the political leanings of PPUC, which were based on his interview with the organization. "I would say my initial impression from reading the newspaper was that the leadership was centrist. My perception after the interview was that the organization was centrist and maybe left of center. [My impression] was colored by some of the people who showed up for the interview. It was after my second interview that I was very aware the organization was left of center."

Mike Downing made a similar observation about those who attended the interviews. "During the interviews … the faces tended not to include the original moderate Republicans."

Reasons to Be Suspicious

Some people assumed the shift to the left was due to the participation of certain individuals, while others thought the platform turned people away from the group. As Patrick Turner said, "I think people knew that Norman James was involved in this group and that the living wage group was involved in the PPUC. You could figure that out by reading the platform. Certainly the perception was that the PPUC was an umbrella organization and the living wage was under that umbrella."

Bob Long suggested that people grew suspicious of participation by members of the living wage group: “It seemed like the group moved towards people who were identified with the living wage, that there was an ulterior motive behind everything and that it really wasn’t as open a group as it initially pretended to be. The issue becomes creditability, Sara.”

Kurt Meyers, a moderate, explained that he limited his participation in the PPUC because he was uneasy with the living wage people. “I thought that some of their concerns were kinda anti-growth. I thought it had some ties to the living wage issue, which I am significantly opposed to because I think it is bad economics.”

The Effect of “Personal Agendas”

Respondents told me that certain individuals should not have participated in the PPUC because they were too outspoken. Respondents suggested that when individuals hold strong convictions on certain issues, you cannot help but think of that particular issue when you see them. In other words, when certain people participate, you assume that they will place certain issues on the agenda. Although some people described this as “passion and commitment” to the community, others described it as the pursuit of a personal agenda. Just as some alliances served the group well, others were thought to undermine the group. Frank Burns suggested that when an organization aligns closely with individuals that have personal agendas, their agenda is perceived as the agenda of the group, which may adversely affect the organization. Burns cautioned the PPUC against this. “I also think that the organization should stay clear from other people’s agenda, for instance I happen to think that the living wage is a perfectly rational and reasonable concept. But, tying the living wage into the PPUC, it set the PPUC to be shot down on a peripheral issue [the living wage] instead of being shot because the organization got something

wrong." Here, Burns is suggesting that the living wage concept was so controversial that it turned people off the PPUC regardless of other aspects of the organization.

In this statement, Burns is referring to the spokesperson for the living wage group, Norman James, even though he does not refer to him by name. James is frequently the target of anti-living-wage critics. Opponents of the living wage who disagree with the concept criticize him, while some supporters of the living wage criticize his methods. People also praise him for his conviction and commitment and say that every community needs someone like him. But other respondents thought that James' mere presence at the earliest PPUC meetings tainted the organization. One respondent described her or his reaction at one of the earliest organizational meetings.

> "It was before the meeting at the church, I remember Roger Wilson was there, which I was surprised about. I also remember Norman James [was present] and gathered that perhaps the World Peace and Fairness Coalition (WPFC) could be trying to organize this. Norman James is a person that [sic] every community needs, and every issue needs. But he is never going to draw a great deal of support … because you have to reach a consensus, and consensus is very difficult for a lot of people … some more than others. I think he is passionate about the issues that he really supports and it is hard for him to see that an evolutionary path may be necessary to achieve [policy goals]. I think the living wage is an excellent issue and I am glad he is passionate about it. I think there is more support for [the living wage] than there was at one time. But you have to get key leaders [to support an issue] … and that is what I saw at the church meeting, some key leaders. [James] has been in town many many years and is totally inflexible on his point of view. I think people know that and are suspicious then, if he is participating. I remember at the first meeting thinking to myself, I wish he had known better not to come. Really, I really did. I felt that he was the impetus behind it, but that [if] he participated, it would not work."

Others speculated that James's presence was the reason why some of the moderate participants dropped out of the PPUC. "I have often wondered if Norman James and the living wage [involvement]… may have set our cause back a little, because people may view him as a hard line activist, a strong activist … if they [moderates] don't support that position they may have backed off."

The Relationship with the Living Wage Group and the WPFC

For some people, any participation by the living wage group in the PPUC was a good thing. Helen Adams, a steering committee member, said, "The living wage group probably initiated the formation of PPUC. [However] they did not maintain the control over it they would have liked, but they did initiate the formation. I am a member of the living wage group so that is perfectly ok with me. I think it was very appropriate having an economic issue as part of our principles … some Republicans support the idea of a living wage [too]…"

Harriet Short agreed, "I know that forces like the WPFC and the living wage group certainly were involved [in the formation of the PPUC]…"

Others agreed that the PPUC had organizational connections to the living wage group. But they observed that other groups also had connections to the PPUC. Diane Knox noted that the neighborhood associations and the school groups also had an interest in the PPUC. "Neighbors in one particular neighborhood wanted to make a change but weren't organized well enough [in the past] to really execute change… I think you would agree that … the living wage was not directly connected to the PPUC but some of those people were interested in the same outcome … I also think the parents on the school district listserv [were interested in the outcome of PPUC]."

Clearly, the living wage group, and by extension the WPFC are part of the PPUC story. Just how much they are a part of the story is not quite clear. Members of the WPFC and the living wage group explicitly acknowledged their relationship to the PPUC. They did not deny that the groups were related. But members of WPFC acknowledged that if the PPUC was closely identified with them, it would have undermined the efforts of the PPUC. Members of the living wage group also acknowledged their relationship to PPUC. Neither group, however, suggested that the PPUC was only set up to address its agenda. On the contrary, those speaking for the WPFC said that the PPUC was set up to address larger social justice issues. Although members of the living wage group noted that many of the original ideas may have been partly theirs, they did not maintain control of the group.

Interestingly, some of those who expressed concern about the PPUC's ties to the living wage and the WPFC were opponents of the living wage or had personal conflicts with Norman James. The fact that people associated their disagreement with the living wage concept to a particular person suggests that Norman James had so effectively become a spokesperson for his cause that his mere presence reminded others of the issues he stood for. Often this prevented people from seeing clearly the other issues at hand.

Although some people said that highly visible public activism associated with a particular issue was a reason some individuals should not have participated in the PPUC, others cited their own public positions as the reason they choose not to participate. Public officials, for instance, did not participate in PPUC because they did not want to appear biased. Similarly, some members of the WPFC also kept a distance from PPUC in order to avoid accusations of bias. Although public officials did not want to appear personally biased, the peace group did not want to bias the public's perception of the PPUC.

Robert Cox recalled how the idea for the PPUC originated with members of the WPFC. He also described how the WPFC distanced itself from the PPUC because they wanted to avoid creating a left-leaning perception of PPUC. “We had talked about this on the WPFC board, about a need for a structure similar to what Welksville had done. That was probably two years before [the 2005 election]. We needed an organization that wasn’t the WPFC [to lead it]. The idea was that we needed to create an organization that wasn’t labeled as too far to the left, but that supported some of these basic principles … quality of life issues, salary issues, housing issues, justice issues. I did not get involved in the PPUC because I did not, like most of the people in the WPFC, want to quickly alienate the moderate Republicans that [sic] were going to be key to getting an organization like the PPUC to work.”

Keeping a Distance

WPFC members were not the only ones to keep a distance from the PPUC. Some kept their distance because of their role in the community. For instance, Simon Smith kept his distance from the group in hopes of future cooperation. “I could see the benefits of having good people to work with. [I was] generally supportive of those events and activities while keeping an arm’s distance from them because, as an elected official, I have to work with whomever it is that [sic] takes the oath. It is hard to advocate in any election for other officials because I am going to have to work with one or the other of them on what is in the best interest of the community …”

Conclusion and Discussion

Resource Mobilization theory assumes that social movements form when organization leaders have access to communication and social networks. Clearly, part of the story of why the PPUC formed in the winter of 2005 is about social networks and people coming together because friends and neighbors invited them to participate. Indeed the group came together because

participants were connected though social networks. Networks were an important part of the group's formation because they brought people together. However, we can see here that these same networks also turned other people away from the PPUC.

Political Opportunity theory suggests that social movements form when organizers recognize there is an opportunity to mobilize and settle grievances. Although only hinted at here, the formation of PPUC began with members of the WPFC and the living wage group, who took the opportunity of the upcoming election and the widespread discontent to bring people together for a cause greater than their own agenda.

The Framing perspective assumes that social movements form when they identify grievances and solutions in a way that attracts adherents. Respondents suggested that the principles were clues as to who was involved in the formation of the PPUC. Some people assumed that the PPUC must have started with the living-wage group because of the principle on wages. Because of the association between the living-wage group and the WPFC, they assumed that WPFC was also involved. For some people the association with the living-wage group was acceptable. For other people the association with the living-wage group was bad because it was considered too unfriendly to business and anti-growth by most Republicans. The inclusion of the wage principle meant that Republicans would not participate in the PPUC. In this way, and by the inclusion of this one issue, the platform both attracted participants and turned them away. It attracted people who supported the living wage, and people who were neutral to the living wage, while it turned away people opposed to the living wage. While other groups were involved, and their interests reflected in other principles, respondents only mentioned the principle on wages as being a significant indication of who was involved in the formation of the PPUC.

It is interesting that so little attention was given to the other principles. For instance, while respondents did recognize that certain principles reflected associations with other groups this did not carry over into suspicions of an "agenda" for the PPUC. They said nothing of the fact that principle number three, "supports the quality of the education system," was the "agenda" of the parent-teacher association. Nor did they express concern that principle number two, "maintains strong neighborhoods with safe and affordable housing," was part of the neighborhood associations' "agenda." Nor, more importantly, that such groups might therefore be the hidden drivers behind the PPUC.

CHAPTER 6 - The PPUC Set Out to Bring People Together

By asking the question, What did the group do? I invited a discussion about the activities and intentions of PPUC. Because respondents differed in their familiarity with the organization and its activities, the question was framed in one of two ways: *What did the PPUC do?* and/or *What did the PPUC set out to do?* Some respondents answered both questions. The idea was to capture what people thought the group did, in both specific and general terms.

Some respondents were able to recall what the group did specifically as well as its intentions. Others were less familiar with the group's specific activities but offered their impression of the organization's intentions and accomplishments. Respondents said that the group took advantage of community discontent and helped candidates by providing additional campaign workers and money. They said that the group promoted community cooperation and bridged party lines.

Generally, respondents said that the PPUC was a coalition of groups that took advantage of community discontent. According to Norman James, a peace activist, "The [PPUC] put together a coalition of groups that took advantage of the growing dissatisfaction with the city commission … in hopes of getting three new good candidates on the commission … in order to have our majority."

Helen Adams, a steering committee member, echoed James's observation: "The [PPUC tried] to change the complexion of the city commission and the school board. Both of which had some very conservative - especially the city commission – Christian fundamentalists … I think we [the PPUC] realized that those people were objectionable not only to the far left like myself but also to mainstream traditional Republicans."

Matt Kent, a PPUC-supported candidate, also thought that the PPUC was a reaction of community discontent. “I would say the organization was a counter-weight to some other voices in the community that were seen as divisive forces and that did not have the interest of the larger community at heart, rather pursuing a narrow agenda… People with narrow agendas are able to have disproportionate voice… The PPUC was trying to be a counter to that …”

Pamela Mathews, a neighborhood leader, suggested that the PPUC formed in opposition to weak leadership, “[The PPUC worked] to help elect more progressive, more courteous, stronger leaders to the city commission… we [the PPUC] formed an opposition to some weak, unprogressive, ineffective leaders on the city commission.”

Harry Douglas, a moderate civic leader, was also dissatisfied with the city commission and suggested that the PPUC set out to elect candidates that had “depth,” “[The PPUC] was trying to put commissioners with depth and an understanding of the issues on the commission …”

Helping Candidates

Several respondents thought that the PPUC had formed as way to pool human resources and helped candidates by working together. Some respondents suggested that the PPUC actually encouraged candidates to run. Malcolm Denning, a neighborhood activist said, “[The PPUC tried] to encourage candidates to run by giving them foundational help.”

Tina Brown, a candidate supported by the PPUC, saw PPUC’s intentions as helping moderate candidates organize their campaigns, “Their purpose was to get candidates to run, moderate candidates… There is an enormous amount of organizing in the run for office. Some of that can be overwhelming to a newcomer. That is where PPUC stepped in and said we will help

you… [The PPUC was] trying to get a candidate a lift up, a leg up … to say we are here for you [the candidate], to help you organize, we are here for you. They did a great job in that."

Olivia Lang, a civic leader, suggested that the PPUC made the run for office less frightening because it provided a base of energized volunteers, "It is a little scary to go out there if you don't have a supportive base [like PPUC]… [PPUC] may have energized some people that might not have otherwise been [energized to participate]… What happens in your campaign, after you announce, in about two or three weeks you realize it's not just your campaign, it is a whole bunch of people's campaign and they are giving their time to you and you feel an obligation to them to give your time."

Marylyn Love, a political activist, said the PPUC "[Identified] candidates who would be willing to run and bring reason back to our [local] government and support them."

Lou Thompson, a steering committee member, thought that the PPUC was more interested in organizing the masses, "[The PPUC was trying] to organize people in our city for the betterment of our city."

Some respondents saw the PPUC as doing more than just supporting candidates. They said the group helped ensure that the incumbents were not reelected. Sam Johnson, a candidate supported by the PPUC said that the PPUC "set out to put new faces on the commission, that meant to ensure that Tom Majors and Ed Brown – if they were running again – to make sure they were not reelected."

How the PPUC Helped Candidates

Supporting candidates and working to ensure that incumbents were not reelected involved mobilization. Steering committee members recalled how the PPUC organized tasks and information. Helen Adams, a steering committee member, said the group worked well together,

which made it easier to get things done, “I think we worked together with moderate difficulty. I don’t think we really worked that much. We dropped literature, we had a candidate forum … we interviewed candidates and we decided who to endorse.”

Diane Knox, a steering committee member, recalled holding meetings and bagging literature. “[The PPUC hosted] casual meetings where we bagged up literature for candidates and found people to distribute them. [The PPUC also] had a listserv where we could contact our members.”

Candidates supported by the PPUC were also aware of mobilization efforts. Candidates noted that some tasks were helpful to their campaigns. Phillip Potts thought that the PPUC helped “both financially and with public relations and voting suggestions. … I had a lot of good ideas [but not] much organization. I did not have a group of people who would be out there getting my name out to the voting populace. Frankly, I didn’t have time to do that myself. The PPUC assisted me with the grassroots movement.”

Patrick Turner, also a candidate supported by the PPUC, appreciated the assistance though he was not sure how important it was to his success. PPUC “did door-to-door literature drops, handing out flyers, they ran ads and had press coverage. You never really know what contributes to your success. I cannot say this is the reason I was elected… I certainly appreciated the fact that they were out doing door-to-door stuff. Just getting my name out there [was important].”

The Effect of Endorsements

Respondents did not agree on the effect of the PPUC’s support to their campaign. As indicated by Turner’s comment above, candidates generally appreciated the support though they did not agree on how beneficial the effect of the PPUC’s endorsement was. Monica Jones

thought that the financial support for her campaign was helpful, though she was criticized by some in the community for accepting it. “I think [PPUC] supported and helped get elected candidates who would be supportive of their [PPUC] views… I did not do a lot of fund raising. I don’t feel comfortable asking people to give me money for a political campaign… Getting money for myself to run … I raised $6,300, and $1,000 came from the PPUC. There was a lot of criticism that so much of my funding was from PPUC. [People said that] PPUC was buying me; I heard that from a lot of people.”

Matt Kent suggested that the significance of the PAC’s contribution was different for each campaign. He suggested it depended on the maturity of each candidate’s independent campaign. “Especially for candidates whose positions are not well articulated, I mean well known in the community. For the candidates who are trying to establish their identify, organizations like the PPUC can be an asset. Groups like the PPUC can reinforce and make clear to the community your position more effectively than I [the candidate] could do by going door-to-door or handing out flyers.”

Certainly, candidates who were supported by the PPUC viewed the group’s activities as beneficial but some respondents also thought the group had an impact on the community because it drew attention to the campaign process, the candidates and local issues. Other people thought the group mended hurt feelings and promoted good will. Pamela Mathews thought the PPUC promoted the upcoming election and all of its candidates, “I think people knew [about the upcoming election] because it promoted the candidates. It got the issues out and it made people think a little bit more, it made people more aware. I was quite amused that in one of the neighborhoods I went to deliver [campaign] materials … the next time I was in the neighborhood

there was a sign for one of the [candidates] we did not support in front of the house. But it was action."

Pat Farmer, a civil rights activist, also thought that the PPUC did more to promote the issues than it did the candidates. Farmer noted that individual members of the PPUC had relationships with other groups, each with an agenda of its own. Farmer suggested that when you put all the different groups and agendas together, you get a group like the PPUC. Working as a group, she said, meant being sensitive to each other's perspective.

> "I thought that we [members of the PPUC] were trying to do something to stir up a little of their [community members'] consciousness about issues that we were each interested in. We had contact with some people who were involved with specific tasks [organizations with agendas] or had a specific subject [issue] in mind and pursued it from that point [as a PAC] …We did not want to insult anybody – we didn't want to hurt anybody's feelings and its hard to do that because sometimes we disagree. You cannot always disagree in harmony. Sometimes you have to shake people up a little to get them to think but then you have to spend time cooling them off. To make it work [with different groups] is a big effort. We spent a lot of time trying to make sure that we did not injure anyone's feelings."

In this last point, Pat seems to be referring to the framing of the platform. In particular, a great deal of effort went into the wording of the platform to demonstrate support for the living wage while not using the words "living wage," because it was seen as language that would offend moderates and turn them away. While this principle was only one of six principles, it was by far the most contentious.

Challenges of Coalition Building

The PPUC recognized the need for cooperation of moderates, as suggested by Farmer's comment above. Robert Cox praised the PPUC's effort to bridge political groups, yet others in

the community were skeptical of the group's intentions. Cox, a peace activist, thought that by trying to be attractive to moderates, the PPUC promoted good will and understanding between liberals and moderates. He suggested that there was contention between the groups going back to the removal of the Ten Commandments.

> "There is this perception based on the things we do as organizations that we are un-American. [Because of this perception] it is important to try to get other people [like moderates] … trying to get some of the moderate Republicans to sign on was really important. I also think that [the PPUC effort] was a healing process, the opposite of the Ten Commandments [lawsuit]. I think that [the PPUC effort] allowed moderate Republicans to see that those of us [who] are left of center politically aren't really here to help welfare mothers on drugs. We are really here because we want it to be a better society and we want a better community, a more vibrant community that is economically diverse."

Here Cox is referring to the perception that the PPUC was a coalition of organizations including the living-wage group, the WPFC, and a gay-rights group. Some people viewed these latter groups as un-American, arguing that they were anti-free market, anti-war, and anti-family.

Despite their best intentions, the PPUC provoked negative reactions in some people. Indeed, the group was not equally well received across the whole community, which surprised Diane Knox.

> "I didn't expect such a negative response from some people in the community. I expected us to have more of a positive impact. In the end, we did have a positive impact – but I expected a little more positive perception from the public than we received. I was expecting to be able to recruit people [to the PPUC] more easily. I expected people to see that we had similar views [as them], that we were not really as extreme of a group that they were envisioning [us to be]. I also was kind of expecting people to be supportive of the fact we were doing it as a PAC [as opposed to having not registered as an official PAC] …"

The University City Libertarian newspaper was particularly hostile. “Beware of the ‘new’ political action committee formed to help elect ‘visionary leaders.’ According to people attending the organizational meeting [at the church], they are the same old University City liberals that do not like to be called communist” (January 27, 2005). Certainly descriptions like this one would make moderates hesitant to participate in the PPUC, which I suspect was the author’s intention.

Conclusion and Discussion

Clearly, the PPUC set out to influence the local election in a period of discontent. On the way to that election, the PPUC identified candidates, helped organize their campaigns, and turned out voters. Some suggested that the PPUC set out to be a diverse group with a shared interest in changing the complexion of the city commission. They said that because of the attention given to appealing to moderates, the PPUC had the potential to be a force for unity and understanding between moderates and liberals. But the group did not manage to be as positive a force as originally hoped because both the moderates and the liberals found reasons to criticize the PPUC.

All three theories of social movements assume that discontent serves a central role in the formation of social movements. Resource Mobilization takes discontent for granted and argues that movements emerge because organizational resources such as money, leadership, and networks are available to make mobilization possible. Though no one suggested that money was important to the group’s formation, some said money had a limited part to play in the group’s success. Monica Jones, a candidate supported by the PPUC, expressed appreciation for the

PPUC's money; yet she also found it problematic because she was criticized for being "bought" by the PPUC.

Networks were important in the PPUC story. Recall Pat Farmer's comments about how the group's character was influenced by the people who attended the first PPUC meetings. She described how the issues that became important to the PPUC were influenced by the organizations represented by the individual participants. Likewise, Norman James described the PPUC as a coalition of groups. The groups that made up the PPUC were networked together by individual participants.

Political Opportunity theory assumes that movements emerge when they recognize an opportunity to be successful. The PPUC took advantage of community discontent by reaching out to like-minded residents and political moderates to create a coalition of groups that influenced the outcome of the upcoming election. In this way, the founders of the PPUC recognized an opportunity to gain political voice because of widespread discontent during an election cycle. The group was formed in order to take advantage of these opportunities by collaborating with moderates and by identifying, supporting, and getting out the vote for candidates who were friendly to its agenda.

The Framing perspective assumes that movements emerge when their agenda is framed in ways that are desirable and attractive to potential adherents. Discontent is important in movement formation because discontent is what motivates people to discard one issue frame and replace it with another. Framing is an important part of the PPUC story because of the central role of the principles, which created an identity for the organization. Nevertheless, the group's identity was problematic according to several respondents. Diane Knox noted that the public was critical of the PPUC's platform despite the fact the group's issues were not very extreme. Robert

Cox observed that people who were not part of the PPUC used the platform to create an identity of the PPUC that was inaccurate. Both Cox and Knox had anticipated that the PPUC platform would be seen as moderate, not extreme. These comments illustrate that issue-framing is an active process that both organizations and their opponents carry out. While PPUC worked hard to select the right words to describe their issues and their character, other people were able to re-employ those same words in ways that made the group appear less credible.

The PPUC mobilized candidates and campaign volunteers. Moreover, they mobilized the public. They mobilized people because they recognized that the upcoming election and widespread discontent provided an opportunity to promote political change. The group's agenda was a reflection of various community organizations that were represented by the individuals who participated in the group's formation. The issues were important to the group because they created an organizational identity. However, some respondents thought this organizational identity was problematic because it did not eliminate the tendency for people to think the organization was extreme.

Here, I have summarized what people thought the PPUC did as well as what it intended to do. In the next chapter I summarize what people thought the PPUC did well.

CHAPTER 7 - They Did Good Because They Educated and Turned out the Voters

The next two chapters describe the respondent's views of the PPUC's strengths and weaknesses. Chapter seven outlines the strengths of the group based on their responses to the questions, "*What did the PPUC do well?"* and/or "*What was the strength of the PPUC?*" As with the third question (chapter 6), I offered alternative phrasing depending on the respondent's association with the PPUC. Those most familiar with the organization were invited to answer the question, "What did the PPUC do well?"; people less familiar with the group were invited to answer the more general question, "What was the strength of PPUC?"

There was limited consensus about what the group did well. Some respondents thought that what the PPUC did best was dropping literatures, mobilizing people, getting them out to vote, and otherwise participating in the election process. Other people thought that the best thing the group did was to encourage candidates to run for office and help motivate them. Some other respondents liked the fact that the PPUC was transparent and inclusive, that it focused on the issues and helped the voters make decisions about the candidates based on the issues.

Attention to the Campaign

Some people thought that what the group did best was raise awareness of local issues. Bob Long, a local business leader, said that this was a positive development, "I'd have to say that anytime an organization… I don't care what their positions are… anytime an organization can bring its issues out in the open and discuss them, it is a good thing. The danger is – I think what started out as a good thing, unfortunately, got polarized and the good faded. I still think it was

good because it raised the issue. It just depends upon where it goes from there." Here, Long was referring to the "polarizing effect" of the living wage issue.

Even the candidates liked the fact that the PPUC kept public attention on the issues. Monica Jones suggested that the PPUC set the public discourse about the election and the issues. "I think to me, the strength of the organization was keeping the issues in the forefront and being able to focus in on the issues that were important to different people."

By being issue-focused, the PPUC also educated the community. Indeed, each candidate was asked to answer a number of questions about local issues that were later used to decide which candidates the PPUC would support. Harry Douglas was one respondent who appreciated the interview process and what he learned from it, "I think the voters themselves were better educated, the approach of interviewing the candidates and asking them some specific questions and then basing a decision on whether the group could support them or not based on the interview was, I thought, an excellent process."

Mobilizing and Educating

Certainly, keeping attention on the campaign was an important part of the PPUC story. But the group's ability to mobilize people was also important according to Monica Jones: "I think the mobilization of a large group of volunteers was phenomenal." Monica was particularly impressed with the turnout at the chili supper, which gave her the opportunity to meet new people before the election. "You had neighborhood people [there], you had living wage people, you had people who were just generally dissatisfied with the local government. The sheer number of people who were attracted to the chili dinner, for example, was phenomenal. I was so impressed. I met a lot of people through PPUC whom I would not have known otherwise because we just hadn't run into each other or we belong to different groups."

Larry Jefferson, a businessman, thought the strength of the group was that it connected many people and kept them informed, "I think that having the forum and bringing people together from different walks of life in University City [was a good thing]. The meeting at the church and then the listserv afterwards [were good things]. The candidate interview process I thought was very good. There were only two forums. The PPUC forum included all the city commission candidates [prior to the primary election] and the forum sponsored by the League of Women Voters [which included candidates for city commission and school board]." Here, Larry is referring to the pre-primary candidate forum hosted by the PPUC, which was the only forum held before the primary election.

What the Candidates Thought

I assumed that the PPUC-supported candidates like Matt Kent would have different ideas about the strengths of the PPUC, because the organization had worked for them. Interestingly, Matt Kent agreed with other people who suggested that what the group did best was promote the election.

> "The money is really not that big an issue. What is more the issue is the increased visibility that you can get as a result of it [the money]. I guess it is the money indirectly, because they were able to independently put out ads and able to independently distribute literature and things like that. That extends the reach of your [personal] campaign. For example, it would not be possible to go door–to-door with flyers and so forth. They went out for a much larger number of neighborhoods and homes than I could have possible reached on my own. And similarly with the newspaper ads, the announcements, the endorsements and so forth gave me more visibility and at least some aspects of my agenda that I couldn't have done by myself."

Kent went on to say that the PPUC worked hard to keep the link between candidate and PAC visible. "There was a very deliberate effort on the part of the PPUC [to link the candidates with the PAC]. They said write letters to the editor and be sure to mention the candidate's name. Always be sure to mention the names of the candidates [when mentioning the PAC]. I think that was critical because otherwise the organization [would get] divorced from the candidates, which can be negative. If the PAC is perceived as something autonomous, independent, working for itself, working its own agenda, it's not seen as supporting candidates, it is seen as working its own independent agenda. I think that would be seen as a negative."

Monica Jones also thought that the PAC helped her do things that could not have been done without their support. "To me the important part of the PPUC was the work force, the collaborated effort to get yard signs out, the door hangers, getting the packets put together and hanging them on the door. That would have been hard to do on your own campaign, with a large group of people it is much easier to accomplish. It was easier to accomplish it with a number of candidates, you know, to put the materials together and get them out. People seem to have appreciated the tear-off cards. They worked well. That was a good idea."

Helen Adams, a steering committee member, said she was conscious of the fact that without the endorsements, nothing would have come of the PAC/candidate relationship. Therefore, for her, the most important thing that the PPUC did was to endorse candidates. "We [the PPUC] provided candidate contributions. We ran ads in the paper; we had a listserv that we disseminated our information via the listserv. I guess probably the formal endorsement was the most important thing. I think that because people called me and asked me 'who am I supposed to vote for? Who did PPUC endorse?' I think people saw that as useful."

The Psychological and Long Term Benefit of the PPUC

Some respondents said the best thing that PPUC did was reassure them that the community would come together in times of discontent and that there was strength in the grassroots. Norman James observed, "Certainly, I think it [the PPUC] showed that lots of people can be motivated to turn out for a city commission election when they feel that change is needed. That initial meeting of hundreds of people at the chili dinner was very impressive and it showed that mobilization of a large number of people could be done."

Harriet Short was also reassured by the grassroots action of the PPUC. "We showed that grassroots citizens in this community can make a difference. You can make a difference without being from the county club or chamber of commerce. It is a huge success in my view. Huge. It is one successful political effort in this town that I have been able to get excited about …"

Marilyn Love, a political activist, thought the best thing the PPUC did was lay the ground work for future change in University City. "It [the PPUC] caused a dynamic change in that campaign that would not have been there without it. Anytime a group of people work together they bring about change. It [change] might not be in the first year, sometimes they do [create change], but they don't always. In order to cause change, you have to lay the groundwork. One of the things the group did was lay the groundwork for the candidates who won by educating the community."

The Spirit of the PPUC

Some respondents thought that what the PPUC did well was not specific tasks, but the spirit in which the tasks were done. For instance, Frank Burns and Kim Strong thought that the strength of the PPUC was its inclusive nature. Frank Burns, a neighborhood activist said: "Overall, I thought the group was very open and willing to listen."

Kim Strong, an entrepreneur, said that the openness of the group made clear what they stood for. "I saw them as very inclusive. That was part of their problem to a certain extent. They were trying very hard to invite everybody to the table, and that appealed to me… I think that they [the PPUC] said 'this is what we want.' 'Are there other people who think the way that we do?' 'If you do [think like we do], come on board [with the PPUC].' They did not make any attempt to hide what the agenda was."

Other people, like Lou Thompson, a steering committee member, said that the group approached decision-making in an intentionally visible way, unlike other groups. "We did everything in the open. They [the opposition] did not. They did everything behind closed doors. We did ours in public meetings." Here, Lou was referring to candidate endorsements by the builders and landlord association, which decided on candidate endorsements without consulting their membership.

The Appearance of Success

It is not clear how much of an impact the PPUC had on the outcome of the election. Most people agree that two of the candidates the PPUC supported would have won their race without PPUC support because they ran strong races, raised lots of money on their own and had good visibility. Of the remaining four candidates supported by the PPUC, two won and two lost. This suggests that the effect of the PPUC was reflected by two victories, not four. In any case, there is some anecdotal evidence that suggests that the PPUC's mobilization efforts won its candidates some votes. Diane Knox recalled a story about a family acquaintance who had just moved to University City in August 2004. "They live in the East Glenn area, which is one of the areas where we did a literature drop. He was a new registered voter and did not know any of the candidates and got our literature on his door knob and thought well 'these all sound like

reasonable people – that's who I am going to vote for.' Supposedly, that is whom he voted for. He was telling [me] that he did not know who to vote for but got this stuff on his door knob and that is who he voted for."

Conclusion and Discussion

Respondents suggested that the PPUC did a number of things well, including mobilizing people to drop literature and aligning candidates with issues. Respondents also said that the PPUC provided opportunities for candidates and activists, made the public aware of issues and candidates while creating an organization that was both open to ideas and transparent in its actions.

Those who suggested that the PPUC did good by helping candidates make connections, as Monica Jones suggested, or helping people stay connected and informed, as Larry Jefferson said, offer support to Resource Mobilization theory. Likewise, Diana Knox's story about her friend who decided who to vote for based on the literature dropped at his house supports the Resource Mobilization theory. In this case, had the PPUC volunteers not have been organized to put the literature on his door, he would likely have gone uneducated and might not have voted. Helen Adams offered direct support for the Resource Mobilization theory when she said that the most important thing that the PPUC did was make the endorsements, which she implied came with human and financial resources.

Norman James and Harriet Short mentioned that the strength of the PPUC was that it brought people together during a time of discontent and proved that people could make a difference if they worked together. Other respondents, like Larry Jefferson, thought that the best thing the PPUC did was provide an opportunity for people to stay informed of the campaign issues and connected with each other. Jefferson liked the candidate forum, which happened only

because of an upcoming election. Other respondents talked about how the PPUC provided opportunities for the candidates to get their name out. Matt Kent, for instance, appreciated how the PPUC insisted that letters to the editor include the organization's name and the names of all the candidates they supported. Had no organization existed, there would not have been an opportunity for all candidates' names to be listed together as supported by one organization. Monica Jones also described how the organization provided an opportunity for her to get to know people she would not have had the opportunity to know otherwise. Some people thought that what made the PPUC strong was that it took advantage of opportunities related to the upcoming election and widespread discontent; others thought that the organization's strength was that it created opportunities for candidates to make connections and community members to stay informed. These observations suggest that political opportunities are an important part of the PPUC story because the PPUC both seized and created opportunities for candidates and for the community during the election cycle. They also support Resource Mobilization theory because the PPUC mobilized its resources and connection to promote the candidates and create further opportunities through forums and letters to the editor. Further, Framing was important because the opportunities the PPUC created also helped the public get to know the candidates by framing them as PPUC-supported candidates.

Many respondents, when asked what the group did well, said that the group linked ideas to people, that it got people thinking about issues, and that it educated the voters. Here, respondents offered support for the Framing perspective. For instance, Helen Adams noted that the PPUC endorsement came with the promise of human and financial resources. However, the endorsement *also* came with an identity and a set of predetermined positions. The endorsement essentially *framed* the candidate. A similar observation could be made about Diana Knox's story.

Diana suggests that her friend who decided to vote for the PPUC supported candidates did so because they were described in a way that her friend found acceptable. The PPUC had successfully described the issues and linked the issues with the candidates in a way that was attractive to the voter in Diana's story.

In contrast, the next chapter outlines what respondents thought the PPUC did poorly.

CHAPTER 8 - The PPUC Was Too Broad to do Much Good

By asking what the PPUC did well (chapter 7) and *What the PPUC did poorly?* (the present chapter), I thought I would get a sense of the organization's strengths and weaknesses. These questions helped me understand how to build on the organization's strengths and what the group might change in the future. These questions were asked in the spirit of action research because they invited a discussion about what respondents thought the PPUC's strengths and weaknesses were, thereby contributing to the development of this and other groups like it.

As with the question about strengths, respondents did not agree on what the PPUC did poorly. Indeed, what some respondents described as a weakness, other respondents described as a strength. For instance, the inclusive nature that Frank Burns and Kim Strong liked in the previous chapter, Norman James described as a weakness. In addition, the organizational platform, which Kim Strong described as worthwhile and clear in the previous chapter, is called by others vague and unclear in this chapter.

The group's principles were a point of contention because some people wondered why the principle on wages made the group's priority list in the first place. Some people said that the group had limited diversity, including age, political, and racial diversity; others did not like the candidate forum. Some of the candidates also took issue with the PPUC. One candidate said that the PPUC duplicated campaign efforts and did not create enough opportunities for candidates to meet people.

Political Diversity

Harriet Short, a steering committee member, expressed disappointment that the group was not broad enough to bridge the gap between living wage supporters and living wage opponents. Short also noted that the group was not sufficiently diverse.

> "Maybe before going public, we could have made more attempts at bridging the gap with people from the Republican party or who have objections to the living wage. [In the future] I think we ought to go looking for minorities [to join the group]. It would be nice to have some younger and some older people. It would be very nice if the PPUC had reached out to Republicans, which clearly we did in some ways. We tried really hard. It would be nice to be able to reach across political boundaries. There are so many people who are unaffiliated out there. I think [next time] we should talk with people in the Republican party about the principles."

Norman James took a different view. He thought the group was too broad, too moderate, and too middle-of-the-road. James thought the group should have taken stronger positions on local issues. He thought the character of the organization as an umbrella organization was a weakness.

> "I think that the PPUC should take some really strong position on the cutting edge issues that have been blocked for time 'immemorial' … that includes rental inspections, housing inspections and the living wage. What else does it [the PPUC] have to do? We have a bland, middle-of-the-road city commission. Does it [the PPUC] just want to keep that going for the next several years or does it really want to strike out in some bold directions? The real struggle I think needs to be between what you might regard as the left or the progressive community in University City and the business community on things like rental inspections and the living wage and if the PPUC is not going to take a position on those things I don't see why it even should exist. There may be other issues to be added to that list, but things like that are really the justification for having a coalition. If it wants to be some kind of umbrella group for the entire community, then what is the

point? I think endorsing the middle-of-the-road candidate who would have won anyhow made it unclear what the focus of this group was. I think the group lost its nerve."

Based on James's comment here and Patrick Turner's comments (from chapter 5) about the PPUC being an umbrella organization with the living wage group under that umbrella, it seems clear that the PPUC's inclusive character was problematic for some people.

Political Immaturity and Inexperience

Kim Strong agreed that the group was too broad, which made it ineffective. "I think it was too broad in scope. They still have rose-colored glasses and believe in the system. They were not prepared with the answers to criticisms… they have to get smarter. I think the agenda was worthwhile." Here, Strong suggested that the group made mistakes because it was not prepared to answer to its critics.

I suspect that Strong was referring to one of two decisions by the PPUC that provoked significant public criticism. The group was heavily criticized for its principle on wages: "Businesses that receive economic development funds should be required to pay workers wages that allow them to live above poverty." Opponents and supporters alike criticized the PPUC for including this principle on wages in its platform. For opponents, the inclusion of the wage principle justified their decision not to support the organizations. For supporters, its inclusion made the group look too liberal.

The media's spin suggests that what became known as the "Longfellow incident" was also a mistake. Prior to the chili dinner, the steering committee had discussed whether it should interview and/or support incumbents, including George Longfellow. The steering committee informally decided that an interview with Longfellow was not necessary because the group and the community knew his positions based on his voting record. Further, it was agreed that

Longfellow would probably not accept the PPUC's support if it were offered. The steering committee assumed that the membership would agree with their reasoning, so it came as a surprise when people who attending the chili supper were upset by this decision, calling it an unfair decision. Indeed, during the question and answer period at the chili supper, a participant asked if the group would interview the incumbents, specifically George Longfellow. The committee co-chair replied by saying, "based on his record, he probably would not be interested in the group's endorsement … though he is welcome to request an interview." (University City News, January 24, 2005). The public response to this comment promoted an immediate reversal of the decision and the incumbent was invited to interview, which he accepted. However, he was not subsequently offered support from the PPUC.

Frank Burns thought the group made other mistakes. Burns suggested that the group's mistakes were a matter of "political immaturity" and unprepared leadership. Here, Frank echoes Strong's observation about inexperience and poor strategy:

> "Political immaturity is when some of us think that if an argument is valid and clear to us it must be clear to everybody else. We have not quite fully learned to focus on the outcome. You were at some of those meetings, you know perfectly well, there were people of good will, clearly with good intentions and not very experienced in political things and sometimes maybe just a little bit stubborn because in their own head they know they were right. [The leadership] was unprepared for the kind of dirt that local politics can produce and backed away [from addressing criticism]."

Unclear Expectations

Some respondents found fault with specific tasks. In contrast to many, Kurt Meyers was disappointed with the forum. Meyers had hoped that candidates would be given an opportunity to talk about specific policy proposals.

> "I found the candidate forum to be unproductive. It was so constrained in terms of how it was structured that it did not lead to good questions, good answers or good debate. It stifled any discussion. I thought maybe the [forum] would focus on objectives. Maybe objectives are appropriate as opposed to specific platform principles. You know, you are committed to maintaining strong neighborhoods and safe affordable housing. So, what are you going to do about it? For example, would they be advocating things like restricting non-owner-occupied rental property to no more than three unrelated people? Which I think would have a huge impact on the housing in University City."

Matt Kent was also disappointed with the opportunities available for candidates to share their ideas. He thought that there should have been more opportunities for candidates to talk with people and field questions.

> "There weren't as many opportunities as I would have liked for public discussion and, even if it wasn't in a formal debate or panel or something, for public opportunities for me or other candidates to field questions. I had a few of those but I didn't have many opportunities for me or the other candidates to field questions. Perhaps if the PPUC would have focused more on how to get a couple nights at the library or something and just have a two-hour informative session with candidates or with this particular candidate or with these two candidates? You know, come and meet the candidate and ask questions. I did not do as much going door to door as some candidates did. It kills time. So the more that you meet and interact with people in larger groups of people [the better]."

Here, Kent criticizes the PPUC for not doing more for his campaign, the implication being that the PPUC's effort to supplement his strategy was not enough. Kent's comment points to the fact that the group did not make clear to the candidates the role the PPUC would play in their campaigns. Tina Brown made a similar observation in chapter 6 when she suggested that what the PPUC did best was to help candidates organize their campaigns. Ironically, this organizing of individual campaigns was not part of the PPUC's mission. As a matter of fact,

before the group decided to endorse Phillip Potts, they considered whether he was capable of running an independent campaign. Matt Kent assumed that the PPUC would organize opportunities for him to campaign instead of making opportunities for himself, a service the PPUC did not offer. Tina Brown also said that she was under the impression that the PPUC would help candidates campaign. Apparently, it was not clear to candidates exactly what the PPUC would or could do for those candidates they decided to support.

Conclusion and Discussion

Disguised in the language of breadth, the most basic criticism directed towards the PPUC was its attempt to bring liberals and moderates together. Liberals, like Norman James, did not like the fact that the group was so moderate. Moderates, like Meyers, did not like the fact that the group supported liberal ideas like the living wage. Indeed, according to the respondents, the group tried to be too many things to too many people. Clearly, the group made mistakes. Some people attributed these to the fact that the organization was new and had novice leaders. Certainly, some of the leaders were new to politics. However, other PPUC leaders had themselves been political candidates and had experience running their own campaigns. In contacts, criticisms about activities and events are the most specific and the easiest to change for the future.

When asked to consider the weaknesses of the PPUC, respondents said that the same conditions that made the group's formation possible also created its greatest weakness. In chapter four (*The Group Came Together Because Discontent was Widespread),* respondents described how the PPUC came together because so many people were displeased with the city commission. In contrast, in this chapter we have seen respondents arguing that the group was *weakened* by the fact it tried to bring all the discontented people together.

The most specific criticisms were directed at what the group did (or did not do) and its leadership. Critics said that the leadership was unprepared for criticism from the group's membership and non-members. These criticisms arose, at least in part, as a result of the inclusion of the "living wage" principle and the "Longfellow incident." In retrospect, it was naïve to have assumed that everyone else thought as the steering committee did. It is also clear, based on the steering committee's defensive response, that it had not prepared an acceptable response to the Longfellow question; that is, to the question of interviewing incumbents.

Criticism of the PPUC also suggested that there was confusion about what the PPUC would do for candidates. This suggests that communication between the PPUC's leadership and the candidates was not precise enough. Based on Tina Brown and Matt Kent's comments, the PPUC did not do a good job of communicating what it would or wouldn't do for the candidates.

Similarly, the criticism about the candidate forum was a criticism about the decisions made by the PPUC's leadership. Candidate forums typically follow a set of rules written by the sponsoring organization. The PPUC forum was organized like other community forums, with pre-selected questions from both sponsors and the audience. As the sponsoring organization, the leaders of the PPUC could have ensured that specific questions were asked of the candidates by asking the questions themselves. The PPUC could have also asked specific policy questions or could have screened the questions to ensure that policy questions were asked of the candidates. Kurt Meyers, who was unhappy with the fact that the forum did not include questions about policies, should have directed his criticism at the candidates as well as the PPUC. Meyers could have criticized the candidates for not offering specific policy recommendations when asked questions during the forum, instead of criticizing the people who asked the questions.

When asked about weaknesses, respondents spoke of the principle on wages framing the organization as too liberal and therefore unattractive to the moderates. They suggested that this principle created a group identity that lacked breath because it was too closely associated with left-leaning people. With the exception of Kurt Meyers, respondents said nothing specific about how the group defined social conditions, problems, or their solutions. Indeed, as suggested above, Meyers's criticism of the forum was as much a criticism of the candidates as it was a criticism of their interviewers. Certainly, framing was a problem for the PPUC to the extent that the principles framed the group as too broad and yet not inclusive enough. The group's breadth included issues that turned away some people, which in turn made it difficult to attract others. In other words, by being inclusive enough to include the living wage, it excluded some moderate people who might also have encouraged still more moderate people to participate.

It is unclear if framing also kept minority members away, or if it could have attracted greater participation by minority people. At least one of the principles, "ensures all citizens have a voice in local government," was intended to reflect the group's commitment to diversity on the school board and city advisory boards.

In the next chapter, I give special attention to the PPUC's principles, and describe what people thought about their role in the organization.

CHAPTER 9 - For Good or Bad the Principles Gave the PPUC an Identity

I asked respondents to tell me what they thought about the principles, which guided many of the decisions of the steering committee. I followed up by asking, *Do you think the principles served a useful purpose?* By asking these questions, I invited respondents to discuss what they thought about the principles in both general and specific terms.

Respondents saw the principles as utilitarian. That is, they said the principles defined the organization's goals, made the agenda clear (or not, depending on the respondent), and gave the group guidelines to make decisions and organize activities. Some people thought the principles were all good, other people liked some of them, but not others. Some respondents suggested that the principles should have been reframed and made more specific, others liked them just the way they were.

The PPUC was set up to elect city commissioners and school board candidates who were committed to a platform defined by six principles. The platform sought a public policy that:

1) maintains the non-partisan character of local government;

2) maintains strong neighborhoods with safe and affordable housing;

3) supports the quality of the educational system;

4) requires that jobs created with economic development funds enable families to live above poverty;

5) ensures that social services receive adequate public funding;

6) ensures that all citizens have a voice in local government.

Practical Purposes

Of course, members of the steering committee were very conscious of the practicality of the principles. They used them to guide the organization, to draft interview questions and to assess candidate responses. They not only served the steering committee in guiding the organization, but also helped give the organization an identity. Helen Adams said, "I think they were critical. Whenever you have an organization, you have to explain what that organization is. The principles provided that explanation. You cannot have an endorsement by an organization unless you say the basis upon which that endorsement is made. I think those principles were very, very important."

Harriet Short thought the principles gave the group an identity, a positive identity. "They are pretty vague. They sort of sound like mom and apple pie and motherhood to me, and the American flag. I do think that they [the principles] served a beneficial purpose because you know when the word got out about us, we were able to say here are our principles."

Diane Knox thought that they were useful as well. However, Knox also thought they caused some confusion.

> "They [the principles] were useful certainly in operating the PAC and keeping track of what our goals are. They helped us not do things that were outside of our principles. But, in terms of the community, again I think there was some confusion. I think some people did not understand that the goal of a PAC was to promote our principles. I think that some people got confused. [Some people thought] that if you don't agree you can join and change our principles. I don't think that some people understood that; that the PAC had decided what their principals were going to be and that is what they were going to support. If you agree, you should join, if you do not agree, you are not a right fit. We're not going to trade the principals for something else to suit you."

Knox suggested that the PAC was not a good fit for all people. The principles were utilitarian because they gave the group an identity and goals – both things it needed. The principles made clear whose interests the PPUC intended to serve. Yet, the principles specified that the group wanted to promote the concerns of many different groups, including people who thought that local government had become too partisan and people who were concerned about dilapidated rental housing and the lack of decent lower-end housing. The PPUC hoped to represent the concerns of people who were disgusted with the situation with the schools and those who supported the living wage concept. The PPUC wanted to promote the needs of people who might have benefited from publicly funded social services and people who wanted to see all groups represented in local government. The principles defined a broad social agenda that was inclusive of a broad group of different people. The principles were thus intended to be diverse enough to attract a broad base of supporters.

Attracting Adherents (or not)

Certainly, the principles were supposed to attract people to the PPUC. But sometimes they turned people away. Many people made the decision to participate (or not) because of one principle. Some people who participated in the PPUC supported one principle more than others, while other people opposed one of the principles and therefore did not participate. Helen Adams thought that people might have been attracted to the group based on one principle, despite their disinterest in the others. “I think there were definitely people who were more interested in one [principle] than the other, that did not mean that they were opposed to any of the others, but they would not necessarily [have joined the group]. Take Lou for example. Lou would not have joined the living-wage group but he is very interested in neighborhoods, so that brought him into the organization.”

Diane Knox said she got involved because she agreed with one particular principle, and she thought that was also the case for other people. “The [quality] school district [principle] was the whole reason I was involved in the PAC. I don’t think that was the most important one to anybody in the PAC [besides me]. I was the only person on the steering committee for whom that was [the most] important principle. I am basing my impression on the fact that people in the older neighborhoods started the group in the first place and that principle [on stable neighborhoods] was the most important principle to them.”

Of course, if the principles could attract people to the organization, the opposite was also true. The principles prevented some people from participating in the organization. One respondent suggested that composing a platform was a balancing act between attracting supporters and alienating opponents. Some, of course, fall in between. Harry Douglas said he was not attracted enough to the group to participate but not displeased enough to oppose it. He suggests there is a difference between not supporting a cause and being opposed to a cause.

> “If there comes a point at which a critical mass has evaporated because of a point [or principle], should that point be there? I think that the living-wage group feels strongly that it [the principle on wages] should [be on the platform]. They feel it is the best interest of the community. I would not agree with it. There may be some principle that others feel as strongly about. It [the PPUC] is more something that I could not support, than something I oppose. I think the non-partisan character of local government is a real strength in this town, at the city level anyway. Candidates don’t run on party lines… Strong neighborhoods, safe and affordable housing, how can you say no to that. That is obviously important. Education in this community is paramount… I wonder, could the group be effective if they would not have points that would be perceived as right or left? … Then it would run into the problem that it would be so watered down that they are not really picking issues. We all may believe in something personally, but if it affects the image of our group and brings the whole thing down, is it wise to leave it in there? … At the time [the principles were written] it probably seemed like the right thing to do. That

might be a way to look at each issue and say what could this do to us as a group if this [principle] were left in or if we took it out. I suppose there could be issues that if removed could also weaken the group."

"Generic" is Good and Bad

Although many people criticized specific principles, several respondents commented on them collectively. Bob Long said they were generic enough to gain support, and similar to the positions of other organizations. But, he went on to say that taken together the principles reflected the agenda of only one group – the living wage group.

> "I think a lot of them are very generic. A lot of people could rally around them. It is the content [of the platform] that is contentious. The devil is in the details, I guess. I think a lot of people are looking at [ideas like] this. The chamber shares a lot of these ideas. You know, we support a quality education system; we want to see strong neighborhoods, and affordable housing. You know, of course we want to create jobs that are good paying, we don't put the word poverty in there, but we do want to encourage all citizens to have a voice in government. If I look at them [the principles], I think that there is enough [breadth] where you could start building consensus around them if people are willing to do that. I think that most people, if they look at all six of these [principles], would think they are broad enough that if asked they could cross over beliefs and political ideologies [to support them]. The devil is in the details and the more you start defining them, the more you start separating where to go and then you get different philosophies and different policies. I think if you really were to take these six statements together and look at them, most people would not have a problem with them. But there are some words in there that when you put this all together, there is an agenda. Because the wage thing is in there, the agenda I think people immediately think about is the living wage agenda."

Kurt Meyers was critical of the nature of the principles and thought they should have been more specific. "Maybe objectives are appropriate as opposed to specific platform

statements. So, you are committed to maintaining strong neighborhoods with safe and affordable housing. What are you going to do about it?"

Problems with Wording

Aside from general comments about the principles, people commented on specific principles also. The first principle (*maintains the non-partisan character of local government)* was not controversial and hardly noted by the respondents. However, principles number two (*maintains strong neighborhoods with safe and affordable housing)* and four (*requires that jobs created with economic development funds enable families to live above poverty*) were mentioned numerous times. Also noted critically was principle five *(ensures that social services receive adequate public funding).* Respondents were most sensitive to the use of specific words. Surprisingly, "affordable" was particularity contentions. Also noteworthy were respondent's reactions to the words "poverty" and "adequate."

The platform framers took it for granted that neighborhood safety and stability would be unproblematic. After all, the neighborhood associations and the Neighborhood Alliance were recognized by the city, they had halted the construction of "super duplexes", and had won changes to local zoning ordinances. Neighborhood issues were not considered radical or left-leaning. The PPUC assumed that there would no objection to the neighborhood agenda. Indeed, some people could not think of a reason to object to the principle. "How can you argue about strong neighborhoods? Even the worst landlords want that."

But the PPUC did not consider whether the use of the word "affordable" would be controversial. Bob Long, for instance, thought that the term "income-based housing" was a better construct. "Affordable," he said, had a negative connotation. "Affordable is a word that I think has some negative connotations. For a lot of people, the word that seems to work better

when you talk about housing is income-based housing, rather than affordable. That does not seem to be as negative for some reason."

Larry Jefferson also objected to the word "affordable." "We need strong neighborhoods, no one can argue with that. For some reason the phrase 'affordable housing' congers up images of collinear type federal housing and subsidies."

Affordable implies the need for housing at all income levels, including the less affluent and the poor. Larry Jefferson and Bob Long's comments suggest that they object to the PPUC's acknowledgement that University City should provide housing to those of lesser means. While Larry Jefferson agrees that University City "needs" strong neighborhoods, he stops short of saying that the community "needs" to provide housing to the less affluent. Clearly, "affordable" conjures a broader frame, which has a negative connotation for some people.

Frank Burns also took issue with the second principle. But Burns did not object to the use of the word "affordable." He saw the issue as one of neighborhood character. "Strong neighborhoods, safe and affordable housing is a reasonable argument. I think neighborhood character is something that we did not stress… The character of the neighborhoods has changed because too many places have been bought up by landlords and the university has failed to provide student housing."

Respondents said very little about the third principle, *supports the quality of the educational system.* Rather, they spoke of it within the context of the complete platform. Kurt Meyers said, "I am a very strong believer in public education, even though I send my kids to a private [religious] school… It is not a religious issue. I just think it is a good environment for our kids. So, I believe in providing a good quality education as well."

Bob Long noted that the issue of quality schools was not just a topic in University City, but it was also happening at the state level. "We are discussing the issue of school finance [at the state level]. The [state] constitution talks about it [adequate public education] and the issue is before the [state] Supreme Court – to provide adequate funding for public education. What is that [adequate funding]? You and I could sit here and have a debate about your perception [of what adequate] is… of course, that is what the debate is about." Long's comment addresses the issue of quality schools but it also hints at the controversy around the meaning of the word "adequate."

The Effect of the Wage Principle

By far the most criticized principle was number four: *requires that jobs created with economic development funds enable families to live above poverty*. Many people objected to the inclusion of this principle. One supporter of the principle thought the principle should have included the phrase, "living wage," other supporters of the idea thought the concept was too contentious and therefore should have been dropped. Opponents, of course, thought the principle itself should have been dropped because they thought the living wage was a bad idea.

Malcolm Denning, a living wage supporter, thought the way the principle was worded "waffled" on the issue because it avoided the words "living wage." "The most specific one here [is number four] and it seems to waffle by saying living above poverty… It seems to be avoiding using the words living wage … [Instead the principle] used the phrase the 'enables families to live above poverty.' Isn't there a gap between the living wage and poverty?" Denning is correct in speculating that poverty level wages and the living wage are not the same. The living-wage group in University City believes employers should pay workers 130% of the federal poverty line for a family of three, or $10.37/hour. PPUC's principle would allow a worker to earn less then $10.37/hour depending on family size. Denning seems to be suggesting here that not only

did the PPUC avoid saying what it meant, which was a living wage, but it also left room for candidates to support low wage employers while appearing to be friendly to the living wage.

Robert Cox thought that principle number four was important because poverty is a problem for University City families, “24.8% of people who live in this town live below the poverty line. That is the most recent statistic from the US Census Bureau. It is not because a bunch of college kinds live in this town. The college kids are driving BMWs and Jaguars and those horrible Hummer things. So don’t tell me that it is a bunch of poor college kids. The people who are below poverty are people like myself and some of my neighbors who have two parents working to pay the mortgage and stay afloat.”

Both opponents and supporters said that the principle was controversial. Although some people thought that it should have been dropped from the platform, others thought it should stay. Harry Douglas, a living wage opponent said, “I would encourage you to drop it [the living wage principle] … that’s a real divisive issue.”

Kim Strong, a living wage opponent agreed, “I can tell you the flashpoint here is number four, the living wage.” By calling the living wage a flash point, Kim is arguing that the inclusion of the wage principle contributed to the organization’s destruction as a moderate group.

Frank Burns, a living wage supporter, agreed with Strong that the fourth principle destroyed the PPUC’s ability to be moderate. “To require jobs created by economic development funds to allow people to live above poverty is not unreasonable. Of course, that is taken to mean the minimum wage by some people who are unhappy about it. It was the downfall [of the PPUC] and it did not need to have been … I would leave out number four, the economic development thing and the social service issue [because] they are political issues, no question about it… I would not include the salary issue, not that I don’t believe in it, that jobs created with economic

development funds should enable families to live above poverty, its just the minimum wage thing." Burn's comment here is in contrast to Harry Douglas's comment (previously in this chapter) where he suggests that to taking issues off of an organization's platform would "possibly water it down" so that it was not really picking issues.

Kim Strong and Frank Burn's comments suggest that the group was "destroyed" by the principle on wages. Even if the principle on wages did not "destroy" the PPUC, it does seem clear that the contentious nature of the principle on wages made it virtually impossible to attract Republicans and many moderates to the PPUC.

Other respondents also observed that the issue was contentious, though they did not think it should have been dropped from the platform. Simon Smith, a civic leader argued, "The wage issue certainly is a hotter button, bullet than the others."

Sara Miller, a leader of the parent/teacher organization agreed, "Yes, the [wage] issue is controversial. Anytime you are trying to get everybody above the poverty line you are going to cause some friction. That's a big philosophical question. It [says living wage] a little bit. … I don't know that I would leave it out [of the platform] though."

Some respondents questioned the process that led to the inclusion of principle number four. Kurt Meyers, a business leader and living wage opponent said,

> "Some of these [principals] that evolved [surprised me]. I was surprised that "jobs created with economic development money allow people to live above poverty," how did that make the cut? I'm just surprised. I would prefer that there not be publicly provided economic development funds. That would be my first position. But that is how the game is played and if it going to be played I practically think contaminants like the living wage are bad economics. The one [principle] I find most objectionable is number four. I don't want any requirements put on business as long as they are functioning. You cannot say that there should be no constraints on business, or any constraints on business of any kind

of employer. What I don't like is when you put constraints on certain businesses [such as those receiving economic development funds]."

Here, Meyers described his objection to the living wage group's position while also suggesting that the concept was too unpopular to have made the list of the top six issues legitimately.

Harry Douglas agreed with Meyers and suggested that the principle "just worked its way into the system." "I remember that brainstorming session. I remember there were lots of stuff [issues listed] and the stars [with which people voted with]. I don't remember that the living wage issue was a real high vote-getter at that meeting? Or did it just work its way into the system?" Here, Harry Douglas was referring to the meeting at the church, which included a brainstorming session and the proposal of twelve issues, which were voted on and reduced to six issues. Participants were asked to vote on *up to* six issues that were important to them. They could cast their votes for six separate issues or, if only one issue was important to them, they could cast six votes for one issue. Indeed, some people did not select six separate issues, but combined their votes on one or two issues. This method of casting votes for issues resulted in the platform, and the inclusion of the principle on wages.

Diane Knox understood the position of the living wage group, which she tried to explain to people in the community. Knox thought that it was not the principle per se that caused the PPUC problems, but the fact that the media distorted the meaning of the principle. "Well, again, I think that principle number four was misinterpreted. Because if you look at it, all it says is that if a business comes here and uses incentive dollars from the city [such as] tax abatements, then they need to pay a living wage. That [idea] was misinterpreted in the press [to mean all businesses must pay a living wage]. I also encountered comments in the community [asking] if

our candidates were elected, would the living wage be enforced across all business in the community, would they have to pay more than the minimum wage? That was not how it was phrased [in the principles]." In a previous chapter, Knox commented that she thought the community was confused about what a PAC does and how the principles function. Here she suggests that there was also confusion about the fourth principle and what businesses it applied to.

Adequate Social or Public Services?

Respondents also criticized principle number five, *ensures that social services receive adequate public funding*, largely because the term "adequate" was contentious. Recall Bob Long's comment about how he saw "adequate" as very much up to debate. Long continued saying: "I think most of the business community wants to make sure social services are strong. Most businesses support either voluntary [giving] or through the United Way, or the food bank or other things, they support public funding. They volunteer and give private funding but what is adequate? I think that is a dangerous word and yet I don't have a better word to give you."

Kurt Meyers' was concerned about the way that "social services" were conceptualized. Meyers argued that the public should fund things like roads and police but he did not think that the government should support "poverty assistance programs" with public funds.

> "Most of the time when they talk about social services they are talking about poverty assistance and things of that nature versus what I call public services. Public services are like streets, sewers and traffic control, police and fire protection – things that everyone needs and therefore need to be public services. Social services are different… I am not terribly opposed to keeping the social service advisory board alive with some funding but you know my preference would be that private citizens be able to provide a more effective way of doing that [providing social services]."

To "Have" or to "Use" a Voice

The sixth principle, *ensures that all citizens have a voice in local government,* was *supposed* to address the issue of diversity on city advisory boards. Each year the Mayor appoints people to serve on advisory boards to the city commission. Many of those boards are packed with people who have conflicts of interest.[18] They also have limited social diversity in terms of gender, race and class. Principle number six was intended to suggest that not all the people's views were being heard at the level of city government. Principle six was not criticized per se, but one respondent suggested that the principle should have been reframed. He said that the issue was not that people did not have a voice, but that people did not use their voice. Frank Burns argued, "I disagree with the phrasing. It should be to encourage all citizens to get their voice heard.… I think instead of ensuring that citizens have a voice in local government [it should be] to encourage citizens to let their voices be heard."

Harry Douglas thought that University City was already an engaged community.

> "Number six, ensuring that all citizens have a voice in local government, I guess is kind of an umbrella statement over all the others. The others are very focused, where as this one is broader. I would suggest that the wording be slightly modified, not only ensure that all citizens have a voice but that they express it, that they are active in the public process. One thing when I was on the city commission … is that University City residents as a group appeared to have more interest in public policy, at least at the local level, than a lot of other communities. I would go to US League of City meetings and talk to fellow commissioners or council people … it just amazed me what little input a lot of communities have in the public process. There was seldom a time at [University City] commission meeting[s] that there was very much room to sit … I think this town does a pretty good job of taking an interest."

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[18] By "conflict of interest" I am referring to the fact that members of the planning board, which approves development and construction projects, includes individuals who directly benefit from such projects. For instance, in 2004, the Planning Board included a realtor, an owner of commercial property, a developer, and a banker.

In contrast, a victorious candidate who was supported by the PPUC recalled her/his subsequent experience as a city commissioner. The limited number of communications from members of the community surprised her/him. “That was a shock. I was sure I was going to be inundated with phone calls and email and letters. But it is rare. The only issue that I have had significant contact from people about has been the clean air issue because they organized an email campaign … I got about 65 emails, which was great … I get very few communications from anybody in the public. The apathy is just rampant.”

Conclusion and Discussion

The principles were an important part of the formation of the group because they describe the organization’s values and agenda, which simultaneously attracted participants and turned others away. To be a member of the PPUC meant you agreed in part (or whole) with the statement of principles, which described what a Progressive University City would look like. Respondent’s comments suggest that the Framing perspective is central to understanding the role of the principles in the formation of the PPUC. Helen Adams, for instance, noted that some people came to the organization because they supported one of the principles though they did not support all of them. Diana Knox noted that she participated in the organization because of one issue, which was more important to her than the other issues. Harriet Short said that the principles gave the group identity and helped other people understand what was important to the organization.

The principles were constructed by the leaders of the PPUC who wanted to make a difference in the upcoming election by mobilizing a critical mass of people. Considerable attention went to selecting the right words to define what the organization stood for and what

kind of community it was working to achieve. Respondents suggest that these principles made very clear what the organization stood for. However, they also suggested that because the group's identity was clear, some people decided not to support the organization. In other words, because the platform was clearly friendly to the living wage group, people who were opposed to the living wage concept did not participate in the organization. On the other hand, the inclusion of the principles on wages, social services and affordable housing makes clear the organization is sympathetic to the needs of the less fortunate. People who might not worry about public education yet are concerned with the needs of the poor would see that the PPUC shares some of their concerns. Together, the principles outlined a vision and agenda for University City. While most respondents said they shared the vision they clearly did not all support the same agenda. As Bob Long said, "the devil is in the details."

People's attitudes about the principles reflected their respective political philosophies. For instance, Kurt Meyers' impression of the principles reflected his general support for limited governmental restraint and personal responsibility. Meyers supported restraints on irresponsible landlords, yet did not think restrains on businesses were good. He was a "strong believer in public education," but sent his children to private school and thought that social services were more efficient when provided by private citizens. On the other hand, people like Sara Miller and Pat Farmer believed that businesses should be held accountable for paying sufficient wages and that social services should get public funds and that University City should have housing that is affordable to people with limited means.

Resource Mobilization assumes that social relationships are an important part of movement formation. Here, we have seen that human resources and social connections were also a part of constructing the principles, which in turn were instrumental in movement formation.

Human resources and social connections played a part in the forming the principles in two ways. First, the issues selected for the platform depended on the presence of individuals at the meeting "at the church." Had no members of the living-wage group attended the meeting at the church, the issue would have likely not been mentioned, nor would there have been anyone to vote on the issue. The formation of the principles and subsequently the group's identity, were dependent on human resources for their evolution from "issues" to "principles." After all, it was people who created "principles" from the "issues" that were decided on at the church. Though no one spoke of the issue framers specifically, they were the individuals most intimately involved in creating the principles because they decided on the specific wording of the principles. They could have chosen, for instance, to have used the term "living wage" instead of describing the position of the living-wage group, or "income based housing" instead of "affordable housing" as Bob Long would have preferred.

While, human resources were related to the construction of the principles, the principles were, in turn, a resource for the group. Harriet Short, Helen Adams and Diane Knox each observed that the principles guided the organization's decision-making process and helped them explain to other people what the group stood for.

Opportunities were also relevant to forming the principles. For instance, Harry Douglas suggested that the principle on wages "just worked its way on to the platform." This comment suggests that living wage supporters saw an opportunity to promote their agenda by working closely with the PPUC and helping to frame the principles. He seems to imply, however, that the issue was inserted into the PPUC's platform. Meyers, who said that he was surprised to see that the principle on wages was on the platform, expressed similar suspicion. He hinted that the issue was on the platform because of who was at the "meeting at the church." The comments of both

men suggest that the principles were the result of the participation by individuals who were known to have their own agenda. The fact that these individuals participated at the church meeting meant, at least to Douglas and Meyers, that they were instrumental in constructing the principles. Though this does not explain why the PPUC formed in the winter of 2005, nor does it explain the role that the principles played in the PPUC's formation, it does suggest that opportunities are important at the level of local politics also.

In the next chapter, I outline what respondents thought about the group's future.

CHAPTER 10 - The Future of the PPUC

Most respondents agreed, when asked about their *Thoughts on the future of the PPUC,* that the group should stay around because the work that the PPUC set out to do has not yet been finished. They thought that the group should stay organized, at least for the sake of local elections, if not remain active throughout the year. Some respondents thought that the group should hold occasional meetings, pay attention to commission activities and commissioner votes, and write newsletters. But not everyone agreed. One respondent saw no future purpose for the PPUC. Another thought that it would be best if the organization just disappeared.

Hoped for Growth

The majority of respondents thought that the group should stay together because its work was not done. Several people were not sure if the group would re-form or not, though they hoped it would. Harry Douglas suggested that the group had a cyclical character that was related to election cycles. "I don't know if it [the PPUC] is still around or not, I am embarrassed to say. I hope so. I think the fundamental basis of the group is still there. I cannot say who is actively involved [right now]. I think it should [be around in the future]. Maybe part of the reason it subsided is because we are in-between elections. A group like the PPUC may come up again in the Fall [prior to the election], and then later in the Spring [with the local election]. I think interest will grow again."

Kim Strong agreed that the group should be around in the future, though she thought it needed to get smarter. "I would like to see them stay around. I would like to see them get politically smarter. If they don't get politically smarter, they are not going to help anyone."

Larry Jefferson predicted that the group would be around in the future. Jefferson also thought that the group would be different in the future because circumstances change. “I think it will revive and retool. No group should be the same every time because issues change, politics change. We hopefully have learned some things.”

Lou Thompson, a steering committee member, also thought the group should be around in the future. He said he would support the reorganizing of the group. “I hope the group is around in the future. I would support it, given the right principles and the right issues. Yes, I would support it.” Here, Thompson hinted that his support of the organization was conditional.

The Need for Human Resources

Some respondents realized the organizations like the PPUC need human resources to function. While several respondents hoped the PPUC would be around in the future, they also realized that it would depend on people being willing to do the work. Mike Downing, a neighborhood leader, wondered if the person-power would be available to keep the PPUC running. “Well, I sure hope so [that the PPUC will be around in the future]. It is the lack of manpower the cripples about everything during the post election panic... How does the PPUC continue and what can we do. I was very vocal about the group having a continued presence in the community. My angle was that the PPUC should produce a monthly sheet of paper that commented on the lies or misrepresentations by the University City Press and the Libertarian News.” Downing is referring to a post election meeting where the PPUC members discussed what the group should do next. His suggestion, at the time, was to pay close attention to the voting records of commissioners and to release its own press reports as a way to keep members of the PPUC informed about local issues.

Marilyn Love, a political activist, noted that sustaining the organization would require human resources dedicated to its future. “I think that it [the future of the PPUC] will take a continued commitment of people like those who initiated it. It will also take bringing resources together.”

Helen Adams, a steering committee member who had given significant time and energy to the PPUC agreed with Love. She noted that she was no longer able to commit to the organization as she did in the past, but sustaining it would require people who had energy that they were able to commit. “I don’t have the energy for it... I don’t have the kind of time I used to have. I think it would be great. I mean I think we could certainly learn from what we did and be even more effective in the future, but it takes a lot of work. It really takes a lot of work.” Here Adams suggested that reflecting on what the PPUC did right and wrong, as this project does, was a good thing.

Pat Farmer, a civil rights activist, suggested a solution to the human resources problem:

> “We need a paid coordinator. You have to pay someone to go and buy stamps and make a telephone call. You can’t just depend on Jane doing it. Jane may decide that she is going on a vacation and she can’t do it, [so she will ask someone] can you take my job? [and they will say] No, I can’t do it because I am going on a fishing trip…. Finding volunteers is really hard… One thing that would have helped the PPUC would have been to have had a contact person that you didn’t feel you were imposing on because they were at work or teaching a class… You need someone who knows that [the PPUC] is their priority and not just a volunteer… There were too many folks depending on too many folks and it created a sense of disorganization.”

Kurt Meyers, a business leader, said that if the organization would revive he would likely get more involved. He recalled that he was asked to participate in the PPUC but was unable to because of other time commitments.

> "I think the group should have provided some structure for some incentives. I think it would make sense to try to maintain it [the PPUC]. There is probably a point at which I wouldn't mind getting involved or having a slightly larger role. I had virtually no role, other than attending the first meeting [at the church]. [A member of the steering committee] talked to me one time [about participating]. They were disappointed that I did not get more involved and thought that I did not because of the positions. That was part of the reason but mostly it was just [the lack of] time."

Work yet to be Done

As noted at the beginning of the chapter, a majority of respondents thought that the group needed to stick around because its work was not done. Pat Farmer noted that social change was incremental and therefore organizations like the PPUC need to stay around to keep things moving forward instead of backward. She also speaks to a general problem of protest groups, which is how the keep the group integrated, organized and energized after discontent has subsided.

> "If you move them [city commissioners] now, just move an inch and pretty soon you'll get your mile in. You [the PPUC] made progress, now we have to try not to move backwards. If you don't move backwards, you keep going forward and things are bound to get better in the future…. The thing that happened after the election was that people who had been involved in the PPUC just let it die… I don't know what happened…. We worked hard and then said now we are done, but our rest will soon end [so that we don't move backwards] and then we [the PPUC] are going to reorganize."

Monica Jones, a candidate supported by the PPUC, agreed with Farmer that the work of the PPUC was not done. She said why it was important to have three commissioners who supported the PPUC agenda.

> "I think a lot of the PPUC's issues still need to be dealt with. I think it [the situation] has improved but until you get three commissioners who will say they support an issue and

> really do support the principles, you cannot make change happen….Unless you have a third person [on the commission] to vote on [an issue], you cannot pass a vote. I have concern with the next election with Smith leaving the commission. For twelve years now, he has provided a pretty steady voice and has supported a lot of things that I support and without him there will be a pretty big void. I worry what the commission will look like."

Jones went on to say that she understood why it was hard to keep people involved in organizations like the PPUC. "We all get worn out from fighting all the time… Fighting is really tiring, it really is. It is hard to run all the time… I am concerned about the next city commission election. How do we get people to keep fighting?"

Pamela Mathews, a neighborhood leader, noted that community dissatisfaction was not the same as it was during the previous election cycle. "I don't know if the level of [current] dissatisfaction with our city commissioners would generate that kind of activity again."

Year Around Status?

Some people were skeptical about the long term need for an organization like the PPUC. Malcolm Denning thought that there really was not much reason for the PPUC to exist as a year-round organization. He suggested that there were other organizations in University City that could do what the PPUC did. "I think we need PPUC-like organizations to move forward… But I am not sure that it [the PPUC] needs to exist year round. Maybe it could be like locusts and just come out at election time. I don't know what its role would be if it were to advocate for things like the WPFC does. I think of the WPFC as being a progressive organization that is there all the time… If the PPUC does not exist [in the future], I hope some other progressive organization will try to help candidates get elected."

Matt Kent, a candidate who was supported by the PPUC, suggested that at the least, the PPUC could serve a network function. "Perhaps the PPUC could be a network resource for

people to share information with when an issue comes up… Networks are important because they make contacting lots of people easy."

Frank Burns thought that what the group needed in the future was some new leadership.

> "I think it might not be bad to inject some new leadership [into the group]. I think we need somebody with energy and willingness. Maybe a young up and coming guy who wants to make a career [would be good]. This [leading the PPUC] would be a good opportunity for someone who is tactful and has an idea about how to make things work… [It is also important] to appeal to people's good will and interests and I would also invite some new people to the group. I would even start out by asking past members if they know people they would recommend as good candidates in the future."

Need for Radical Change

It is clear that respondents did not agree on what the future PPUC should look like. Most suggested that it should be similar to its 2005 form. However, two respondents, Norman James and Patrick Turner suggested radical change for the organization.

Norman James held a less optimistic view of the future of the organization than other respondents. He agreed with Denning that there was no need for the PPUC to exist year round, but went on to say that the reason the PPUC did not need to exist was because it did not have a significant role in the community. "The PPUC only needs to exist in the future if it takes a stand on positions that pull the community in the direction that it [the community] needs to go. If it is going to just be a kind of umbrella group, to screen out the really bad people from running for election, I don't think it has any significant role to play." In a previous chapter, James suggested that the PPUC should take up on-going issues, like rental inspections and the living wage. He also said previously that the PPUC had "lost its courage."

Patrick Turner, a candidate supported by the PPUC, also saw reasons that the PPUC need not exist in the future. Turner suggested that the group's success may have provoked retaliation from certain conservative segments of University City.

> "My sense is that the PPUC should probably just go away. I say this because I fear there is a conservative group in this town that may say 'we can't let this [the PPUC] happen again' and they get into a kind of cold war, a bidding war to raise money for candidates…. If the PPUC steps back into the political arena, my fear is that this other organization will organize, rally, and retaliate, making things more difficult [for moderates and progressives]... The PPUC was successful enough to motivate retaliation by this conservative group."

Conclusion and Discussion

It is evident that most respondents thought that the PPUC should remain a viable organization in the future. However, respondents were also conscious of the fact that if the group is to be sustained it will need people who are willing, capable, and committed to the cause. They noted that discontent is not likely to be as great in the upcoming election, which might make it harder to mobilize people. Several people were unsure what role the organization could or should play outside the election cycle. Still, one of the group's greatest critics, Norman James, thought the group should stick around, though he thought it should only do so if it took a different perspective. The only respondent to say the organization should go away was Patrick Turner, a PPUC supported candidate who was afraid of a conservative backlash if the group continued. Indeed, Patrick Turner said in a previous chapter that he appreciated the PPUC's help on his campaign even though he did not attribute their help with his victory.

Respondents' greatest concerns for the future of the PPUC were related to the its ability to mobilize human resources and identify future leadership, though respondents did suggest that

the lack of widespread discontent might make it difficult to mobilize people in the future. They did not seem concerned about the group's future ability to raise funds. This suggests that at least at the level of local movement organizations, human resources are more central to sustaining a movement.

Several respondents spoke of the PPUC in cyclical terms, as an organization associated only with the election cycle. They described the PPUC as an organization that formed and could reform in accordance with election seasons. Some respondents questioned what role, if any, the PPUC would have beyond the election season. Respondents said that opportunities for the PPUC to mobilize were limited to the election and they wondered if there would be enough discontent in the next election to mobilize people. The respondents that thought the PPUC should be active beyond the election season described its activities as being similar to other progressive groups in the community. Here, the issue is forming and reforming a movement organization in accordance with political opportunity.

Based on respondent's comments, the PPCU clearly framed its mission as one associated with the election cycle. Although a couple of respondents suggested that the group expand its activities beyond the election cycle, most thought that being active only during the election cycle was good enough. Only Norman James suggested that the group entirely reframe itself. On the other hand, Larry Jefferson predicted that the group would, at least, "retool" for the next election. Two respondents suggested that their future support of the organization was conditionally associated with the group's principles. Lou Thompson said he would support the group, depending on the issues it pursued. Kurt Meyers hinted that the principles were an important reason he had not participated in the past, but they were not significant to his future participation. Several respondents, including Monica Jones, suggested that the future of the PPUC should be

determined by the extent to which the objectives of the organization have been met. In other words, they said that because the goals of the PPUC, which were outlined by the principles, have not been achieved, the PPUC must continue its work. As Pat Farmer said, "As long as we are not moving back, we are moving forward." These observations lend support for the role of issue framing in sustaining a local movement.

In the next chapter, I discuss the theoretical implications of the story of the PPUC. I also discuss the practical implications for the PPUC, organizing in University City and for social movements in general.

CHAPTER 11 - Theoretical and Practical Implications

In the spirit of Action Research, I conclude this project with a discussion of the theoretical and practical implication of the findings. I will discuss the theoretical implications for social movement theory and then outline the implications for organizers like myself in University City and in other cities. I also discuss the implications for the PPUC itself.

The story of the PPUC suggests that none of the three social movement theories -- Resource Mobilization theory, Political Opportunities theory, and the Framing perspective -- can alone explain why a progressive social movement formed in such a conservative place. Each of the three theories accounted for a part of the PPUC story, but none of them adequately explained why the PPUC formed in University City when it did, in the winter of 2005. A complete theoretical account of social movement formation in University City must include a discussion of what caused the group's formation, who led the group, and how the group brought people together, and why they participated. An explanation that does not address all of these issues can only partly explain why the PPUC formed in University City during the winter of 2005.

Because each theory of social movement formation accounts for a different part of the story, it is necessary to include all three theories in order to answer the central research question, *why did PPUC form in University City in the winter of 2005?*

Although all three theories assume that social movements form when people are unhappy, none of them assumes that discontent is a sufficient condition for movement formation, unless it is sufficiently widespread. According to Political Opportunity theory, social movements form when opportunities for successful mobilization are apparent, such as election cycles. Because the PPUC organized in the winter of 2005, just a few months before the 2005 election,

Political Opportunity theory provides a useful explanation for the timing of what happened within that election cycle, but not across election cycles.

Political Opportunity theory also accounts for the relationship between the living-wage group and the PPUC. The theory suggests that activists in one group sought to build a broader movement and recognized that current political and social conditions represented an opportunity. In other words, because discontent was widespread, the living-wage group was able to bring several groups together and construct a collective agenda that mobilized people to change the composition of the city commission. Other groups also took advantage of widespread discontent and joined the PPUC's effort. For instance, people who were unhappy with the school board took advantage of the PPUC's formation and worked with the group to elect new school board members. In 2007, the group Smoke Free University City (SFUC) joined with the now continuing PPUC to help elect commissioners who supported a clean indoor air ordinance. These developments lend support to Political Opportunity theory and Resource Mobilization theory and illustrate how the theories strengthen each other. Indeed, SFUC saw an opportunity to work the PPUC and get supportive candidates elected, which in turn expanded the base of supporters, which PPUC could mobilize.

These developments were assisted by the fact that the people of University City had connections with the people in Welksville, who had organized a similar PAC two years earlier. Because they had connections with the people in Welksville, and had learned the basic organizing of a PAC, the people of University City took advantage of the opportunity to learn from others and avoid making the mistakes that the people of Welksville had made.

Although Political Opportunity theory accounts for *why* the social movement formed and *who* organized it, the theory does not explain why the group organized when it did, in the winter

of *2005,* instead of prior to some other election. The theory does not distinguish how the election cycle of 2005 was different from previous election cycles, except to suggest that more people were discontent in 2005, then during other election years. Nor does it explain *how* the PPUC formed.

The issue of *how* social movements organize is best explained by Resource Mobilization theory, which argues that protest groups form because discontented people have access to social networks, financial resources, and have people capable of leading organizational efforts. This theory helps explain how protest groups accomplish their goals through the mobilization of people. The theory explains why the PPUC was able to distribute thousands of pieces of campaign literature and dozens of yard signs. It also highlights the role played by informal connections and friendships in the political process. Thus, it explains *why* it was possible for the PPUC to form a local social movement. However, it does not explain *why* people joined or participated in organizational activities, nor does it explain why they choose to participate at one time and not another.

Although Resource Mobilization theory and Political Opportunity theory explain much of the central question, they leave gaps in the explanation. The Framing perspective helps fill these gaps. The Framing perspective assumes that discontented people participate in protest groups when the group defines grievances and offers solutions in a way that is reasonable to potential participants. Framing is an important part of organizational formation because organizations must motivate people to become members and participate in their activities. Issue frames attract people by describing problems and solutions in ways that are agreeable to the potential participant's belief systems. Issue frames inspire people to become members of an organization because they agree with the organization's principles and goals.

For example, people joined the PPUC because they liked that the group stood for affordable housing, a quality educational system, or non-partisan local government. People who did not like these principles did not join the group. The Framing perspective accounts for the role that the principles played in constructing the group's identity and identifying its goals.

The Framing perspective also accounts for the way the PPUC defined good and bad government. By suggesting that an unresponsive government should be replaced by one that values diversity, supports a quality educational system, the living wage, a non-partisan local government, affordable housing and public support for social services, the PPUC changed the dominant frame, which said that a good government was small, pro-business, narrowly focused on the budget, and prayed to a Christian God. People who agreed with the PPUC's definition of a good government joined the organization. People who believed that a good government was small and fundamentally Christian did not join the group.

Although the Framing perspective explains what motivated people to participate in the PPUC's activities, it does not account for *how* the group organized itself in order to mobilize people. Nor does it explain why the group formed in the winter of 2005. Framing accounts for why peopled were attracted to the ideas of the PPUC and why they were motivated to give their time and energy to the organization. However, it does not explain why the organization was available for them to give their time and energy to in the winter of 2005.

The Implications for Social Movement Theory

There are three implications for theory. The first implication is that because none of the three theories alone can fully explain the formation of a progressive social movement in a conservative place, they should be used in combination with each other to fully understand why and how progressive social movements form. These three theories do not contradict each other

and they are not competitive. Rather, they are complementary and together best explain why progressive movements can form in conservative places. This research has found support for all three social movement theories. Each of them helps in some way to answer the central question, though each is limited. For instance, Resource Mobilization theory explains how and for what reasons the PPUC mobilized people. The PPUC was able to mobilize people because the organizers had connections with groups of people. The PPUC mobilized people to drop literature and raise money. Political Opportunity theory describes how the living-wage group took advantage of growing community discontent and initiated an organization that would promote its agenda. The Framing perspective attributes the organization's formation to the principles and their ability to attract participants.

I have also found that heeding the guidance of only one movement theory would have mixed results because each theory ignores part of the movement story. Resource Mobilization theory, for example, assumes that movement organizations develop strength through their associations with other groups. Heeding only Resource Mobilization theory an organizer might assume that networks are always good, while in fact they are also problematic and can make groups vulnerable to criticism. Resource Mobilization theory does not account for this effect of social networks. Indeed, the PPUC's association with other groups gave them a base of supporters, but also created opportunities for opponents to criticize the group *because* of its supporters and associations with certain, more liberal groups.

The Framing perspective also offers incomplete guidance to movement formation and organization because it does not account for the problematic nature of organizational frames. The Framing perspective argues that movements attract adherents by having clear frames. Using only the Framing perspective to guide organizational formation, organizers might overlook the

unintended consequence of frames. In other words, organizers might not realize that frames get the attention of supporters and non-supporters. Although frames define an organization and attract some people to it, they can also signal to opponents what the group is about, which may energize opponents to distort or redirect the group's frame. In other words, when a group clearly defines who it is, so that it can attract people to join, it can set itself up for retaliation by people who oppose the frame. If this happens, the organization may have to work harder at explaining why its frame is better than the others.

The PPUC created a frame for itself, which was as a non-partisan, living-wage-friendly grassroots organization. Opponents created a different frame for the PPUC, which was that the group was a "Liberal," "Democratic," anti-growth organization.

Political Opportunity theory also has pragmatic limitations for movement formation. Using only Political Opportunity theory as a guide, an organizer would gain little understanding as to how to motivate people to come together or how to get them organized to create change.

These theoretical weaknesses are eliminated when key elements of all three theories are combined. A complete theoretical account should recognize that movement formation is a more complex process than proponents of Resource Mobilization theory, Political Opportunity theory, or the Framing perspective imagine. Using just one of these theories to explain movement formation can lead to an oversimplified explanation of why movements form. A better theory combines the three. When combined, the oversights of each theory are accounted for by the others. For instance, the failure of Resource Mobilization theory to acknowledge that networks may also be problematic is accounted for by the Framing perspective. Resource Mobilization theory assumes that networks are beneficial because they connect the movement organization with people who are mobilized to carry out the movement's agenda, but it ignores the fact that

sometimes movement organizations are connected to groups who are or can be "framed" as undesirable by movement opponents or even the public more generally. Groups may be undesirable because they are too liberal or too conservative. A movement organization's connection to such a group may subsequently undermine the organization because people assume that the movement organization is like the associated group. The fact that the connected group affects the way people view the movement organization is a matter of framing. The movement organization is framed as liberal, not because it is liberal, but because it is associated with an organization that is framed as liberal. This suggests that framing helps explain the problematic nature of associations.

For instance, the connection between the PPUC and the living-wage group was not a problem per se. The groups shared a concern about wages in University City and many living wage supporters were PPUC supporters. Rather, the problem with the PPUC's association with the living-wage group was that conservative opponents then framed the PPUC as a "liberal" organization with ties to the more "radical" WPFC. These connections, which were good because they gave the PPUC an immediate base of supporters and made mobilization possible also made the PPUC appear as a front organization for the living-wage group and WPFC, which led critics to conclude that the PPUC was a "leftist" organization.

However, the Framing perspective is itself incomplete. The Framing perspective suggests that frames are good because they attract participants to a movement organization but it does not account for the liabilities of frames. For instance, the Framing perspective ignores the fact that frames may also get the attention of movement opponents, who may mobilize the opposition by creating an alternative frame. Political Opportunity theory assumes that movements mobilize when there are opportunities for their success. Political Opportunity theory accounts for the fact

that an opposition group may create an alternative frame in response to the original movement's frame because they recognize an opportunity to successfully contradict the message of the movement organization. Further, opposition groups may recognize an opportunity to launch a contradictory frame because of the media. The media may make opportunities to contradict the movement organization's frame possible.

For instance, the retaliatory frame of the PPUC as "liberals" was launched because University City conservatives saw an opportunity to create a "liberal-left-leaning" frame that contradicted the PPUC's frame of itself as "moderate." The media made the retaliatory frame possible because it had given the PPUC attention. The *University City Press* had written several articles about the PPUC and included the group's principles. Had the PPUC gone unnoticed by the media and the principles ignored, the conservatives would not have had an opportunity or a venue to criticize it and construct an alternative frame.

In sum, understanding the formation of progressive movements in conservative places requires a theory that accounts for elements of movement formation that neither Resource Mobilization, nor Political Opportunity theory, nor the Framing perspective alone can provide.

Implications for Organizers in University City

The story of the PPUC has several implications for community organization in University City. First, it is important for organizers to realize that University City has a history of protest and that protest groups have often played a role in building coalitions as a way to create social change. Appreciating the formation of the PPUC should include a recognition that protest has been a part of the University City community for many years.

University City was not new to protest. However, the formation of a new, local, political action committee was a significant event. People in University City had previously protested

against school closures, the placement of the Ten Commandments monolith at City Hall and, more recently, in June 2006, protested a local business because it received millions of dollars in tax abatements, yet paid workers less than $10.00 an hour. High school students and community citizens protested the fundamentalist preacher Fred Phelps when he brought his "God Hates America" campaign signs to town, and the WPFC held weekly anti-Iraq-war demonstrations in a central shopping district. The WPFC has also been credited for starting the living wage campaign and a local gay-rights group. In interviews, some people attributed the formation of the PPUC to the WPFC.

The story of the PPUC suggests that while the community was familiar with protest, mobilization, and coalitions, building a new one was not easy. Although discontent was widespread in University City, it was a difficult place to build a broad-based bipartisan coalition. University City liberals argued that progressive organizations should make bold initiatives, while University City moderates thought the PPUC should make general and centrist initiatives so as not to alienate possible supporters. The fact that a moderate-progressive coalition materialized under those conditions is significant. The fact that the group succeeded in electing of some of its candidates was an even greater achievement. One respondent said she knew that the PPUC did something right because it had made *both* liberals and conservatives unhappy. "We have made the Liberals mad and the Conservatives mad. We must be doing something right." Building a coalition was hard because it had to be attractive to people with different ideas.

The story of the PPUC suggests that sometimes your greatest critics are your supporters and sometimes they are right. Frank Burns and Kim Strong, both supporters of the group, criticized it for being naïve and unprepared. They said that if the PPUC was going to survive, it had to get smarter. In some ways they were right because the PPUC was not prepared to respond

to accusations of a hidden agenda. Although the principles were conceptualized as a way of making the agenda clear, the group had no method of discrediting its critics who accused it of having an ulterior motive. Further, the group had not taken into account the possibility that its agenda would motivate opponents. They had not considered that the organization's frame would both attract adherents *and* mobilize opponents.

Critics who make to discredit others are sometimes right. In 2005, critics speculated that the PPUC was affiliated with the WPFC, calling the PPUC "liberal communists". As the group retooled for the 2007 elections, critics said the same thing, arguing that the PPUC was a front organization for the peace and justice group. In a March 18, 2007, letter to the editor of the *University City Press* one reader argued that the PPUC was not a neutral group. "I have checked and know that [the PPUC] has many of the same supporters and members as the World Peace and Fairness Coalition… What I am saying is that there seems to be an attempt to convince the public that certain people are unbiased and neutral, when just the opposite is true." (University City Press March 18, 2007 "The PPUC is a left-leaning group that supports liberal candidates")

Assertions like this one are both true and false. They are true because the WPFC did take steps to organize the PAC in the fall of 2005. However, people like Roger Wilson and Diana Knox, who did not belong to the WPFC, expressed interest and soon took leadership roles in the PAC. By the next election cycle in 2007, the only individuals to hold leadership roles in multiple organizations were myself and another steering committee member who belonged to the Veterans for Peace group.

What This Means for the PPUC

The implications for the PPUC are that if it is going to be sustained it must learn to deal with the complexity of community relationships and recognize that not all relationships are

equally beneficial to the organization. It will also need to prepare for continued accusations about its character and mission and adapt to changing degrees of community discontent.

Clearly, the group's greatest challenge was its association with the WPFC because critics saw the WPFC as its most significant tie and sought to use this to discredit the PPUC. Although the PPUC's tie to the WPFC was controversial, it was not the only significant relationship for the PPUC. Other relationships were also important to the PAC because they helped mobilize people. If the organization had not had connections with people through neighborhood groups, parent organizations, and other local groups, as well as the WPFC, it would not have been able to distribute thousands of pieces of literature or raise thousands of dollars. Because the organization was new to the community, it did not have the time or the resources to generate its own members. The only way for the group to reach out to people was through its associations with other groups. The presence of such groups in the community thus appears to be a critical condition for the formation of broader movements like the PPUC.

Unfortunately, the positive effects of the PPUC's relationships with other groups were overlooked because of the attention that critics gave to a small group of people who were members of both the PPUC and the WPFC. Critics asserted that the associations of a few people meant that the PPUC's goals were the same as the living-wage group and the WPFC.

The PPUC should also assume that accusations about the organization's associations and purpose will continue. It would help the PPUC if leaders acknowledged their organizational roots, instead of denying them. To deny the relationship between the PPUC and the WPFC, when people know better, makes PPUC leaders appear deceptive, as the author of the March 18, 2007, letter asserted. Furthermore, to deny to the members of the WPFC that there is an association between the two groups implies that the PPUC is not a social-justice organization. It would be

disadvantageous for the PPUC to argue that they were *un*concerned with social justice issues. Therefore, it would be beneficial to the PPUC to acknowledge their associations with other social justice groups and then suggest that the association is less significant than critics imagined or portrayed it to be.

For example, the PPUC might have responded to the letter-writer's accusation that the PPUC was liberal by pointing out that an assertion like this was true only to the extent that some people held dual memberships in the PPUC and the WPFC, just as they often held dual membership in parent and neighborhood organizations. The PPUC could then say that the accusations that the PPUC was influenced by the same ideals of the WPFC were irrelevant because holding membership in one group does not necessary affect the agenda of the other. For instance, the PPUC might have challenged the letter writer by suggesting that opposition to the war in Iraq has little to do with one's attitude towards local zoning policy.

Ironically, some of the strongest critics of the PPUC were members of the living-wage group, who thought the PPUC had become too moderate and moved too far to the middle. They said the group failed because it did not take a strong stand in support of the living wage.

If the PPUC is to be sustained it will need to mobilize people and win their support, which will depend, in part, on the degree and character of community discontent. One of the ways that the PPUC can continue to demonstrate its relevance to the community is by responding to new, emerging issues of discontent, such as smoking bans, property taxes, dangerous dog ordinances and the length of the school day.

As the 2007 election cycle approached, some people wondered if the PPUC would organize again. It was clear that the community was not as dissatisfied with the city commission or the school board as it had been in 2005 yet the PPUC was still there. The chili dinner was

smaller and the PPUC's bank account did not grow as quickly or as easily. However, the press was also kinder and gave the group more positive attention than in 2005. *The University City News* published two front-page articles about the steering committee and the PPUC-sponsored candidate forum.

Politics in University City were indeed different in 2007 than they had been in 2005. Although some people were still unhappy with the decisions of the city commission and the school board, the sense that there was an urgent need to change the city commission and the school board had subsided. In 2007, people were unhappy with the city commission for using its power of eminent domain for commercial redevelopment in the city core and for failing to pass a ban on smoking in public places. But, at the same time, people were pleased to see that the commission welcomed public comment during meetings, that city staff were not scolded publicly by commissioners, and that commission meetings did not include Christian prayer.

People were also still dissatisfied with the school board in 2007, but for different reasons than they were in 2005. In 2007, people were unhappy with the school board because it proposed changing the number of class periods from seven to six and had considered a change in the way that parental consent was given for sex education courses. In some ways, the context has significantly changed. In 2007, the school board was no longer dealing with the issue of school closures, but was instead preparing to reopen a closed school. They were no longer talking about cutting staff positions and programs and had created a new Diversity Coordinator position to address the needs of an increasingly diverse community. They had also increased the wages of hourly workers, including paraprofessionals and bus drivers. In addition, the board had approved all-day kindergarten, which required additional costs to the district.

As the PPUC retooled in 2007, it reacted to the changing nature of community discontent by changing the group's principles and the interview questions for screening potential candidates. In order to address the issue of the smoking ban, it added a principle on public health. In order to express support for an increasingly diverse community, it asked school board candidates about their support for the district's Diversity Coordinator position. These adjustments gave the PPUC an additional base of supporters.

Implications for Social Movements in General

The story of the PPUC also has implications for progressive movements in general. It suggests that at the core of a movement is a set of philosophical principles, which articulates the movement's character and tactics. Sometimes movements make decisions that sacrifice these principles in order to sustain the organization's ability to create change (or simply to survive). Such decisions have unintended consequences for movement organizations because by choosing one path, they are foreclosing other options. It is important for movements to consider the effect of their decisions on their long-term prospects. Finally, the story of the PPUC suggests that a movement may emerge because another similar movement inspires organizers and serves as an organizational model. However, movement models do not adequately address the differences between communities in which movements arise.

The story of the PPUC suggests that at the core of the PPUC's agenda is a belief system that says that all people are entitled to safe housing and a fair wage. Those who opposed these principles believed that safe housing is a privilege earned through work that is available at any wage. These philosophical differences are vast and would result in significantly different policy initiatives. Differences like these should not be ignored, however movements should be cautious

when addressing them because they may distract groups from their mission, which for the PPUC was getting out the vote and supporting its candidates for change.

Some respondents thought that the PPUC should have responded to the philosophical criticisms and should have pointed out contradictions in their opponent's arguments. They thought the group should have been more defensive and responded to its critics. But if the group had responded to criticism about the merit of its principles, it might have distracted the group from its mission, which was to mobilize people for change in the upcoming election. For instance, had the PPUC directed its human resources toward an educational campaign on the merits of a fair wage or sufficient housing for all people, it would have been forced to shift resources away from getting out the vote. While launching an educational campaign would likely have helped the PPUC in terms of educating the public, such tasks were best suited for organizational members of the PPUC coalition, like the living wage group or the neighborhood associations.

Being true to a set of principles is certainly desirable but sometimes impractical. Sometimes organizations are forced to decide between pragmatic politics and their principles. The PPUC decided that pragmatic considerations were more important than its principles when it endorsed Patrick Turner. The PPUC was criticized for endorsing Turner because some people saw it as a departure from its principles. This opinion was particularly true for supporters of the living wage group. Turner did not support a living wage, though he was well-respected by the neighborhood associations and was likely to win his race. Turner was also a registered Republican and considered a moderate. Nonetheless, in many ways, Turner represented what other respondents said the PPUC was striving to be, which was moderate and respected.

At the time, another candidate, Tom Vernon, expressed support for all of the PPUC's principles. He supported the living wage, was concerned about affordable housing and acknowledged that the city advisory boards were made up of people with conflicts of interest. Yet, Vernon was not endorsed by the PPUC. The issue for the PPUC steering committee was pragmatic. They thought that Turner could be elected but Vernon could not, in part because Turner was wealthy and Vernon was an unemployed veteran. Tuner had served on city advisory boards while Vernon was known only for his regular comments at city commission meetings. The PPUC's endorsement of Turner, over Vernon, was a pragmatic decision. The PPUC decided to support a candidate who was sure to win, despite his lack of support for the living-wage principle. They decided not to support the candidate who was sure to lose, despite his support for the group's principles. Turner was thought to be elect-able because of name recognition and status in the community. Vernon, on the other hand had no name recognition and no employment. Further, Turner's economic status gave him credibility while Vernon's unemployed status limited his.

The decision to support Turner over Vernon was not consistent with the PPUC's principles. In fact, it contradicted them to some degree. It suggests that the principles were not the only consideration for selecting candidates, and that the PPUC also considered its own credibility in the community in its decision to support candidates. Supporting a candidate who was "a known commodity" and likely to win, but did not support all the principles was considered the lesser evil to supporting a losing living wage supportive candidate.

Although the decision to support Turner did not force living wage supporters to withdraw their support from the PPUC, it disappointed many of them. Over time, other people

in the PPUC have expressed disappointment with Turner, largely because he failed to support a proposed anti-smoking ordinance.

In 2007, the debate over endorsing candidates who do not fully support the PPUC's principles continued. Some people thought the 2005 endorsement of Turner was good because it made the group look moderate and gave them a clear victory. Other people thought the Turner endorsement was inappropriate because he did not support all the principles. They have argued that Turner's subsequent votes have also not reflected the PPUC's principles. Some have expressed regret for supporting Turner, while others still support him. Those who are unhappy with Turner did not want the PPUC to endorse candidates who would not support the platform in its entirety. They argued that this undermined the purpose of the platform, created confusion among the group's supporters, which may alienate the organization's base. Those who thought the endorsement of Turner gave the group creditability argued that the benefit to the PPUC in terms of credibility outweighed the loss of enthusiasm toward it from more liberal constituents. They argued that the liberals have no choice but to support PPUC's candidates, because the PPUC candidates are the "lesser evils." However, the loss of enthusiasm may result in lesser participation by the liberals in the future, which may undermine the effectiveness of the organization to mobilize people.

The liberals and their connections were central to the mobilizing efforts in 2005. They provided many of the networks that helped get out the vote. In 2007, the liberals were less enthusiastic about the PPUC and fewer of them participated in the chili supper and literature drops. By the election of 2007, the PPUC has lost the attention and interest of many progressive people in University City who elected to give their attention to individual candidates or not at all.

The story of the PPUC also suggests that the effects of social movements are subtle. Although some political changes can be attributed to movement efforts, others can be attributed to external forces. Many of the recent political changes in University City can be attributed to external forces, and not the PPUC. For instance, the school was reopened because the military had redeployed families back to the area, not because the PPUC opposed school closings. The need to address the district's growing diversity issues cannot be attributed to the PPUC. But creating an administrative position to deal with diversity awareness can be attributed to the PPUC because the group helped elect school board members who valued diversity and subsequently supported the creation of the Diversity Coordinator position. Indeed, in 2007, the PPUC based its decision as to who it would endorse for school board based on whether the candidate supported the Diversity Coordinator concept.

External forces have also affected city policies. Just as the redeployment of military personnel affected the decisions faced by the school board, it has also affected the decisions of the city commission. The community has seen rapid growth, which has increased the need to provide affordable housing. At the same time, the community is dealing with a significant redevelopment project in the city center. These two developments -- rapid growth and redevelopment -- have shifted the community's attention away from commissioner's personal demeanor and community prayer. Now the community is focused on how the commission will deal with economic issues associated with growth.

A final implication for social movements is that in some ways movement organizations have similarities yet they are also different. It is important not to ignore organizational differences. The PPUC was similar to, yet different from, other protest groups in University City. It was similar to other groups because people who were unhappy with community developments

wanted to create change. What separated the PPUC from other organizations was its focus and structure. The PPUC was more narrowly focused on electing public officials. Its structure was unique because it was the first registered political action committee in the county and because it was organized as a coalition of groups with different political views, who shared a commitment to changing the composition of the city commission and the school board.

The group was also similar to a local PAC in Welksville, which had been the model and inspiration for the PPUC. Because Welksville is a more liberal community compared to University City, is less transient, does not host a military base or a Christian college, the model required modifications. The PPUC had to consider the issue of framing the platform so that it addressed the unique concerns of people in University City. The PPUC also had to find ways to adapt to a community with a higher proportion of transient people and lower number of people who identified themselves as progressives.

The fact that there is no precise model for social movements to follow means that all movements will have to consider the unique conditions under which they form. Organizers who seek to initiate a social movement will have to examine the complex social environment, the history of the community, the position of other organizations in the community, and the availability of resources. Movement organizers will surely make mistakes, which they will have to address. They will be criticized, which means they will need to choose to respond to or ignore criticism. Movement organizations will have to have the resources and know how to mobilize people while staying focused on bringing people together to create social change.

Conclusion

The PPUC formed in the winter of 2005, because progressive local organizations, including the WPFC and the living-wage group recognized an opportunity to promote their

agenda by initiating the formation of a PAC. The resulting organization's platform attracted members because it included issues that were salient to a significant number of University City residents. The movement organization did not form before 2005 because discontent was not sufficient and because the leadership of the PPUC did not have a model to follow.

In 2005 discontent had spread beyond the usual progressive suspects and included the moderates. The moderates were less discontented with the policy decisions of the city commission than they were with commissioners' public demeanor. The fact that the moderates were displeased gave the progressives an opportunity to initiate the formation of the PPUC - in order to take advantage of the moderates' displeasure. The fact that people in the community were also displeased with the school board gave the progressives an opportunity to enlist their help also. Those displeased with the school board added to the base of discontented moderates and progressives.

Sufficient discontent coincided with the idea to form a local PAC. The idea came from the PAC which formed in Welksville in 2003 - two years or one election cycle prior. Indeed, the key people in the PPUC were active in community organizations prior to the formation of the PPUC. Many of them were likely helping city commission candidates already. What the leaders of the PPUC did not have until the election cycle of 2005 was a model for the PPUC. In short, the PPUC was only possible because discontent was sufficient and widespread enough and community activists had an idea about what to do about it.

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Appendix A - Chili Supper Invitation

People for a Progressive
University City
100 N. New Hampshire
University City, MW 77413

Place
Refrigerator
Magnet Here

Dear Friends,

We write to you on behalf of a growing group that believes that we need a new vision for *University City* that will reflect the interests of a majority of residents. We have formed a non-partisan Political Action Committee with the goal of influencing the April elections for both city commission and school board. We will work to elect city commissioners and school board members who are committed to public policy that:

- maintains the non-partisan character of local government
- maintains strong neighborhoods with safe and affordable housing
- supports the quality of the educational system
- requires that jobs created with economic development funds enable families to live above poverty
- ensures that social services receive adequate public funding
- ensures that all citizens have a voice in local government

We are concerned about a lack of coordination between the school board and city commission, a failure to preserve traditional Manhattan neighborhoods, and the implementation of economic development. Other concerns include some of the commissioners' "vision" for *University City*, as well as the divisive nature of some commissioners' actions and comments.

We are convinced that qualified, viable candidates have met defeat in the past due to poor voter turnout, and a lack of coordination in campaigns. *The People for a Progressive University City* is asking you to help us change this. We need to identify, educate, and motivate voters who share our concerns but regularly skip local elections. We can change the direction of our local government—this will take a lot of work, and we need to start now.

We are having a kickoff chili dinner on Sunday, January 23 from 5 to 7 p.m. at the *City Center* at 321 Leonardwood St. to discuss campaign plans in greater detail. If you share our concerns, we hope that you will attend. Please RSVP by Jan. 21 to *PPUCPicnic*@cox.net so we can get a head count for food. We will also be taking donations to finance our effort. Working together we can make a difference.

Sincerely,

The PPUC Steering Committee

Appendix B - Informed Consent

Informed Consent

May 2006

Project Title: A look at Resource Mobilization, Political Opportunities Model and Framing Perspective at the Local Level

Principal investigator(s): Sara L. Fisher, M.A. (saraf@ksu.edu), Robert Schaeffer, PhD and Frank Weyher, PhD 204 Waters Hall, Kansas State University, Manhattan, Kansas 66506.

Institutional Review Board (IRB) contact: Rick Scheidt Room 1 Fairchild Hall, Kansas State University, Manhattan Kansas 66506, 785.532.3224 (comply@ksu.edu)

Purpose of research: To identify what social and political developments led to the emergence of the local PAC, *People for a Progressive University City*. Also, this project examines the applicability of the major theories of social movement emergence to the specific case of *People for a Progressive University City*.

Procedure and method: Face-to-face interviews and content analysis of media and organizational documents.

Length of study: Participants are expected to participate in one face-to-face interview that will last about an hour.

Risks anticipated: There are no physical risks anticipated. There could be social or political risks to respondents if individual level data become public knowledge.

Benefits anticipated: The *University City* community could potentially benefit by recognizing what specific developments led to collective behavior that seemingly brought about political

change. The PAC will benefit by learning about the community perception of the organization. Potentially the PAC could amend its ways in accordance with community perception that is revealed through this project. Further, other organizations could learn from the PACs experiences. Finally, interview respondents might benefit by sharing their thoughts on local community action, or they might find satisfaction in contributing to a better understanding of their community.

The extent of confidentially: All research notes and tapes will be secured in Waters Hall 204. Individuals and places will be identified only by a pseudonym. Pseudonyms will be used in the final analysis and report.

Terms of participation: I understand this project is research and that my participation is completely voluntary. I may withdrawal my consent at any time and stop participating without explanation or penalty.

I verify that my signature below indicates that I willingly agree to participate in this study under the terms described. Sara L. Fisher and/or Robert Schaeffer will maintain my signature as proof of my consent.

Contact Information: Sara Fisher saraf@ksu.edu or 785.564.2457
Robert Schaeffer 785.532.6865

Participant Signature _____ Date _____

Appendix C - Interview Guide

Interview guide

Resource Mobilization, Political Opportunities and Framing at the Local Level

Thank you for agreeing to talk with me about local politics. As I said, I am writing my dissertation on how the *People for a Progressive University City* came to be. I am also interested in understanding what community members thought about the organization, its goals, tactics and success. I wonder if the story of the *PPUC* is in line with the three theories of social movement formation? As a part of the *PPUC*, I am eager to hear about other people's perspective.

Let me assure you that your responses will be kept confidential. I will not share your comments with anyone who might identify you. In the finally analysis and report, I will use pseudonyms for people, places and organizations.

You may stop talking to me at any time and you may refuse to answer any specific question. I am most interested in your perception and your opinion.

Informed consent

First, I want to know a bit about you. What is your role in the community, how long you have lived here, what is your trade? Have you ever held a public office?

a) How would you describe your role in the Manhattan community? For example, are you a businessperson, community leader, or plain ol' citizen?
b) How long have you lived in the area?
c) How did you come to be here?

What do you know about *the PPUC* or *the People for a Progressive University City*?

What was its mission?

Why do you suppose they came together?

What motivated them?

Were they successful?

Who was involved?

Where/who did the idea come from to form a PAC?

Was forming a PAC necessary? Why did they form a PAC?

What was the political nature of the group – did the group have a political affiliation?

Did you participate in any of their activities?

Which activities did you participate in?

How did you learn about the activities?

Why did you participate?

What did you think?

Who else participated?

Did you receive their mailings or email messages?

Did you read them?

What did you think about them?

What about the door hangings?

Did you learn about their activities from other groups?

How do you suppose you got on their mailing list?

Did someone call you the day of the election? Where did they get your number?

Did you give them money?

How much?

Did other people you know give them money?

What was the money used for?

What role did you expect the group to play in the community? In the election?

Would you describe the group as 'successful?'

Why?

What did they do right?

What did they do wrong?

Four of the candidates they supported won. Two they supported lost. Did the victories or losses have anything to do with the support by the PAC?

Do you suppose they will be around during the next local election?

Do you think they should?

Will they be as successful next time?

Were any criticisms directed towards them?

Who from?

Was the media favorable toward them? Or unfavorable?

What do you think about the “principles?”

Do you recall what they were?

What is/was your reaction to them?

Appendix D - Description of Free Nodes

1. **City commission candidates – unsuccessful race** – comments about the unsuccessful city commission candidate, including responses to the question why did the candidate not win?

2. **What the group did well** – comments about what the group did well, including what it should do in the future.

3. **What the group did poorly** – comments about what the group did poorly, including what it should do in the future

4. **Living Wage** – comments both good and bad about the living wage group and the living wage concept.

5. **History of living wage group** – comments about the living wage group in University City, including its evolution and past actions.

6. **The living wage group was behind it** – comments suggesting that the living wage group was behind the formation of the PPUC.

7. **Principles** – all comments good or bad about the principles.

8. **Principles were broad enough** – comments suggesting the principles were broad enough to attract a base of support.

9. **Principles framing/wording** – comments about specific wording of the principles including suggestions for revisions.

10. **Principle on wages** – all comments about the principle on wages.

11. **Who was involved** – references to who was thought to have been involved in the group's formation, including the living wage group.

12. **The group became** – comments about the what the group became, how it shifted right or left.

13. **Candidate interviews** – comments about the what people thought of the candidate interviews, including why they were good.

14. **Endorsements** – comments and impressions about endorsement choices and the process of selecting candidates.

15. **Endorsements hurt candidates** – comments about how/why the PPUC endorsement hurt candidates.

16. **Help candidates** – comments about how the group helped, or did not help candidates.

17. **Living wage as a liability** – comments that suggest the living wage group was a liability to the PPUC and individual candidates.

18. **Living wage opposition** – comments about why and how people object to the living wage group or concept.

19. **Why the group formed** – comments about why people thought the group formed.

20. **PPUC was left-leaning** – general comments about the PPUC's left-leaning character.

21. **Perception of the PPUC by business** – comments about the perception of PPUC by business people

22. **Perception of PPUC in general –** all comments about the perception of the PPUC, not limited to any group.

23. **Activists –** comments about local activists, including Norman James.

24. **Goal of the PPUC** – comments about what the group's goal/objective/intention were.

25. **Who invited you** – comments about who had invited the respondent to participate in the PPUC, or how they had heard about the group.

26. **Group successes** – comments suggesting the group was or was not successful.

27. **How many –** comments about how many people participated in group activities, including discussions about defining membership.

28. **Expectations of the group –** comments about what respondents thought the group would be like and how they thought the group would be perceived by the community.

29. **Apathy –** comments about voter and/or community apathy.

30. **PAC status –** comments about PAC status, if it was necessary or not.

31. **Media response to the PPUC –** comments about how the media responded to the PAC.

32. **Confusion –** comments about how there was confusion about the PAC, including confusion about the principles.

33. **School board –** general comments about the school board.

34. **Pleased with election results –** comments about the outcome of the election including how the PPUC-supported candidates have voted since taking office.

35. **Candidates think –** comments about what the candidates thought about the PPUC.

36. **The group's future –** comments about the group's future, if it should reemerge and how it should change.

37. **Welksville model –** comments about the PAC in Welksville, including how it was used as a model for the PPUC and how it was successful.

38. **Chili dinner –** comments about the chili dinner.

39. **City commission candidates – successful –** comments about the successful city commission candidates.

40. **University City politics –** general comments about University City politics, including history and context.

41. **PPUC leaders –** comments about PPUC leaders, who they were and what people thought about them.

42. **General community involvement –** description of respondent's involvement in the community.

43. **I dropped out because –** comments about why people dropped out of the organization, including time constraints and disagreement with the principles.

44. **Political philosophy –** descriptions of respondent's political philosophy.

45. **Appearances important** – comments about why candidate's appearances are important.

46. **Commissioner Longfellow** – general comments about commissioner Longfellow, including the "Longfellow incident."

47. **Involvement with PPUC**– comments about the respondent's personal involvement, not including leadership.

48. **National politics** – comments about national politics.

49. **Marriage amendment** – observations about the amendment to the state constitution, which was on the local ballot in 2005.

50. **Significant connections** – comments about organizational and personal connections or respondents.

Appendix E - Analysis of Free Nodes

1. What is your perception of why the group formed?
    a. Why the group formed
    b. Perception general

2. Who was involved in the group's formation?
    a. Who was involved
    b. Who invited you
    c. Living wage group was behind PPUC
    d. PPUC leaders
    e. Personal involvement with the PPUC
    f. I dropped out because
    g. Significant connections

3. What were the group's goals?
    a. Goals of PPUC
    b. Expectations of the group

4. What did the group do well?
    a. The group did well
    b. How PPUC helped candidates
    c. Group Successes
    d. Candidate interviews
    e. Chili dinner

5. What did the group do poorly?
    a. The group did poorly
    b. Confusion
    c. Living wage was is a liability
    d. Endorsements hurt candidates
    e. Longfellow incident
    f. Left-leaning

6. What purpose did the principles serve?
    a. Principles
    b. Principles were broad enough
    c. Framing/wording of the principles
    d. principle on wages

7. What are your thoughts on the group's future?
    a. Group's future
    b. Pleased with election results
    c. The group did good
    d. The group did poorly
    e. PAC status
    f. Apathy

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