

Collective Identity and Identity Work in a Nonprofit Organizational Coalition

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Abstract

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This study examines the role of collective identity in nonprofit coalition-building, using critical discourse analysis of a case study of an Asian American nonprofit organizational coalition focused on advocating for community health access and equity. The study finds that the pan-ethnic collective identity is a resource for the organizational coalition studied. The study extends existing literature on inter-organizational studies and nonprofit organizational coalition-building through the introduction of a conceptualization or model of *identity work* as involving both the activation and strategic deconstruction of the pan-ethnic Asian American collective identity. This study finds that identity work, as conceptualized, can be critical not only to sustaining a pan-ethnic coalition, but also to ensuring that a pan-ethnic coalition of nonprofit organizations embodies social work value of social justice and ethical responsibility of cultural competence and social diversity.

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To Mark, Jayan, Mom and Dad

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

This study explores if and how collective identity is deployed in nonprofit organizational coalition-building. Specifically, the research focuses on the role of a pan-ethnic collective identity in the processes of Project CHARGE (Coalition for Health Access to Reach Greater Equity), “an advocacy collaborative to address health equity and access issues in Asian Pacific American communities”¹ Project CHARGE is convened and led by the Coalition for Asian American Children and Families, a nonprofit policy advocacy organization in New York City.

In this chapter, I introduce the nature of this study and indicate what I set out to achieve, as well as shed light on its relevance and importance. I also briefly outline the analytical frameworks that I draw on for my analysis. I explain how my interest in pan-ethnic coalition-building developed and provide some background information on the coalition and community studied. Finally, I provide a road-map of the remaining chapters of this thesis.

My *central research question* is whether and how collective (ethnic) identity/ies are deployed, and how collective identity is activated and/or destabilized in organizational coalition-building. Using interviews, observations, and document reviews, I first explore the nature of Project CHARGE as a coalition and social movement organization; second, I consider various processes within the coalition as well as forces influencing those processes; I then consider the contextual factors and importance of the Asian American collective identity to the coalition; and finally, I pull from organization, social movement, and identity theories to conceptualize identity work as it applies to organizational coalition-building in Project CHARGE.

¹ <http://cacf.org/home/what-we-do/advocacy-equity/health/project-charge/>

Ultimately, the study aims to extend existing literature on inter-organizational studies and nonprofit organizational coalition-building through the introduction of a conceptualization or model of *identity work* as observed in Project CHARGE. Identity work, which generally means the activities engaged in by an entity to sustain an identity, has been used by multiple organizational studies scholars and is helpful in understanding organizational processes, but carries no single definition (Brown, 2014). I use various theoretical frameworks to conceptualize identity work in the coalition-building of Project CHARGE as involving both the activation and strategic deconstruction of a collective identity. Chapter Two is a review of literature that offers an examination of the frameworks and theories upon which this study is based, including organizational theories, collective identity theories, and social movement theories. The literature review also highlights the gaps in literature and where this study may help extend existing scholarship.

Through analysis of data collected on Project CHARGE, this study finds that a diverse nonprofit organizational coalition such as Project CHARGE may benefit from engaging in identity work, as conceptualized through this study. This study finds that identity work might play a role in helping to sustain a coalition among diverse organizations centered around a collective identity, even when forces such as a limited and competitive resource environment might serve to destabilize the coalition. Further, identity work within an organizational coalition of service providers may enable the coalition to better embody and enact social work values of social justice, ending oppression, and promoting cultural and ethnic diversity. Chapter Five is an analysis of the nature of Project CHARGE and the lead organization, the Coalition for

Asian American Children and Families. Chapter Six develops the main findings of this thesis involving collective identity and the conceptualization of identity work.

This study employs a case study method and is heavily informed by critical discourse analysis. Critical discourse analysis allows the study of discourse at multiple levels – individual, organizational, and social. It encourages the identification of shifting balances, competition, and tensions within discourse. Using this method, I spent over a year in the field examining various discursive moments within Project CHARGE's processes and structures. Project CHARGE, formed in 2008 by a group of nonprofit and other advocates within New York City's Asian American Community, is a sustained pan-ethnic coalition, offering a significant amount of data in the form of discursive moments. Chapter Three of this dissertation provides a robust description of study methods, and also explains the theoretical frameworks that inform the shape and structure of the study.

My own interests in studying the Asian American collective identity began in 2001, when I first began working within the community as a social worker around the time of 9-11. It was at that time that I began thinking about how, according to the U.S. Census, I was considered Asian American and what that meant for me and for the larger collective community that I was assigned to be a part of. Until then, I didn't consider myself Asian American. My own socialization led me to believe that the pan-ethnic identity only referred to East Asians – specifically Chinese. I realized that the pan-ethnic identity was a complex social construct that often felt like a forced and unnatural grouping. But I also saw it as a potentially powerful collective community, especially at a time when many of individual Asian ethnic communities felt under attack with the growing anti-immigrant sentiment and Islamophobia.

Once I began to consider myself a part of the larger Asian American community, I started to pay more attention to the dynamics and diversity of the community. I was interested in how I and potentially many others like me experienced and used the pan-ethnic identity. As I had experienced it, the pan-ethnic identity seemed peripheral or secondary, although acknowledged, accepted, and even embraced and celebrated when prompted. I became curious about the various socio-political reasons to identify as Asian American, the ability for individuals and communities to weave in and out of the identity, and the idea of power and pride in the collective.

In the ten years I spent as a social worker invested in advocacy and research for Asian American community, I began to further understand the pivotal and historic role that organizations and organizing around the Asian American (also termed Asian Pacific American or Asian Pacific Islander American) collective identity played in empowering communities of color and fighting for social justice. But I also saw, many times first-hand, how the use of the pan-ethnic identity was disempowering when not inclusive or representative; or when the identity was twisted into harmful stereotypes of Asian Americans as the model minority and the perpetual foreigner.

The Asian American movement of organizing and organizations is, at its core, a pan-ethnic identity-based movement that encompasses a very diverse community, including multiple religions, national origins, languages, antagonistic histories, immigration experiences and generations, education levels, socioeconomic status, and racial phenotypes, among other factors. In Chapter Four of this dissertation, I provide some context on the Asian American community in New York City, including its diversity and complex needs. I also briefly share

some context on Asian American organizing and organizations to frame the socio-political context in which Project CHARGE operates. In Chapter Seven I discuss future questions for study and the relevance of this study to social work research, practice, and education. My research is an extension of my own personal and professional experiences. I hope that it might help inform the important work ahead for coalitions fighting for equity and social justice for communities of color, including Asian Americans.

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In this chapter, I highlight literature that is relevant to and that explains theories that inform my study of coalition-building across diverse organizations. I also review literature that provides background on the rationale for viewing the non-profit organizational coalition, the case I have chosen to study, as a 'social movement organization'. The literature reviewed in this chapter is also used in the discussion of key themes and interpretations, through which I hope to extend the knowledge base around collective identity and coalition-building across diverse ethnic organizations.

I begin the review by summarizing theories on collective and politicized collective identities and on framing – specifically frame alignment or resonance, which shape my central research questions, inform my methods, and guide my coding rubric and data analysis. I continue the review by highlighting literature that supports the notion of the centrality and importance of organizations and organizational structure in social movements. I review literature that looks at non-profit organizational coalitions and collaborations that have traditionally focused on goals of improved service-provision and organizational sustainment rather than social justice or social change. Finally, I dedicate a section of this literature review to scholarship that highlights the various complexities of applying organizational processes and maintaining organizational structures in social movement spaces. This literature is important to assess the organizational context within which the coalition I study operates.

Critical to this study and highlighted in the literature review is the concept of *identity work*, which although proven useful in the study of organizations carries no singular definition (Brown, 2015). Through this study of collective identity and coalition-building, I extend existing

literature with a conceptualization of identity work that I apply in examining the role of collective identity in organizational coalition-building.

A. Review of theories supporting methods and analysis

1. Collective and Dual Identity

Identity, and specifically collective identity, is critical to studying processes of Asian American pan-ethnic social movement coalitions. Not only is identity central to social movements, social movement organizations, and coalition building, but the Asian American identity is a complex pan-ethnic collective identity that forms the basis of the identity-based social movement. Collective identity processes are complex, involving multiple contradictions and potential conflict. The “us” vs. “them” is not always clear, and therefore the sustainment of a collective identity requires work – specifically identity work (Snow and McAdam, 2000). The concept of identity work, although lacking a singular definition, most commonly refers to personal or individual identities within the context of broader organizations, and the various processes of how the individual and organizational or collective identities are reconciled (Brown, 2015). In the context of social movements, the identity work of organizations is an attempt to align personal and collective identities and involves identity amplification, consolidation, extension, and transformation (Snow and McAdam, 2000).

I am interested in applying a specific conceptualization of *identity work* to the work of an organizational coalition, which is attempting to assert and activate a collective pan-ethnic identity amongst organizational members. The focus of my study therefore contributes to the field of study of identity work in applying the conceptual framework to at an organization-organization level rather than an individual-organization level. In the following sections

addressing Asian American pan-ethnicity and politicized collective identity, I highlight other relevant frameworks of identity work that are used in the conceptualization of identity work in this study.

Taylor and Whittier's (1992) seminal study of the LGBT community provides a brief description of collective identity as a "shared definition of a group that derives from members' common interests, experiences, and solidarity" (p.105). They describe the process of constructing a collective identity as involving the construction of boundaries, the negotiation of meaning and ideology, and group consciousness-building within the context of larger socio-political frameworks (Taylor and Whittier, 1992). Organizations' formulations of collective identity are critical in influencing individual-level identity as they bridge macro-level or social/structural factors and the individual psyche and identity development (Simon, 2011).

Simon and Klandermans (2001) establish two levels of collective identity. The first is a general collective identity category (gay, woman, etc.) and the other level is a politicized collective identity (PCI), which rests on the following critical concepts: 1) a shared collective identity, 2) shared grievances and a struggle for power; 3) attributions of blame between in/out groups within the same polity; and 4) recognition of a social context (i.e., bystanders/ public). More specifically, the PCI is that form of a general collective identity that underlies group members' willingness to "engage, as a mindful and self-conscious collective (or as representatives thereof), in ... a power struggle knowing that it is the wider, more inclusive societal context in which this struggle takes place and needs to be orchestrated accordingly" (Simon & Klandermans, 2001, p. 323). Research shows that individual PCI is a predictor of collective action or mobilization (Simon, 2011; Van Zomeren et al, 2008; Klandermans et al,

2008; Klandermans & Weerd, 2000). Studies of the gay rights movement have shown that in most cases, individuals' identification with the social movement or social movement organizations (a more politicized identity), and not their general identification as gay, predicts their participation in collective action. An exception to this tendency towards identification with a social movement was found when there was more broad-based and public politicization of the general social category, or identity (i.e., during public debates around same-sex marriage) (Simon, 2011).

Multiple scholars point to the politicized nature of the Asian American collective identity and label this as *panethnicity*, which, in addition to a level of identification, also includes a sense of group consciousness or solidarity (Min, 2010; Chong and Rogers, 2005; Wong et al., 2005; Masuoka, 2006). In fact, Nagel (1994) argues that ethnic identity is itself political and politicized by nature, as it is associated with the distribution of resources and power, and with political and cultural opportunities. Panethnicity is a political identity with the potential to influence mobilization behaviors of individuals, communities, and organizations (Okamoto, 2003, 2006, 2010; Wong et al., 2005), and it involves some level of political consciousness above identification with the collective.

The framework of dual identities is also relevant to the Asian American community because of the high percentage of immigrants that comprise the population. Dual identities, which are a combination of ethnic and national identities, have been found to be central in mobilizing immigrant populations. Chrysochoou and Lyons (2011) find that minority individuals must identify with or feel a part of the larger polity in which they operate in order to be able to make claims and seek change. Therefore, the politicization of an ethnic minority

identity requires some level of identification with host nation ideologies and values, which, within the context of a democratic nation, would involve expectations to have certain rights and be treated fairly or humanely (Azzi, 2011; Klandermans et al, 2008). A study of Turkish immigrants in New York City found that if they were aggrieved, having a dual identity (over an ethnic or national identity alone) and being embedded in ethnic social networks predicted participation in collective action (Klandermans et al, 2008).

According to Simon (2011), a PCI of any subgroup (not necessarily immigrants) exhibits similar characteristics to and resembles processes of a dual identity, as both involve identification with a specific group and a larger polity or society. The idea of dual identity needs to be further explored in terms of panethnicity. For example it would be important to consider the relevance of dual identity to immigrants versus native born Asian Americans and whether panethnicity itself is a dual identity, or whether and when elements of the two frameworks of identities might overlap.

2. Panethnicity and Ethnicity: Asian American Experience

In the U.S., ethnic groups are often lumped together into single race and ethnic categories – examples of such categories include African American, Native American, Hispanic or Latino, and Asian American. Although many aspects of the Asian American community and community experience might be similar to those of other ethnic and minority groups in the U.S. that have also been lumped together into one ethno-racial category and have also shared experiences of segregation, prejudice, injustice, and disempowerment, the Asian American community is unique.

Unlike Latino populations, Asian Americans do not share common cultural markers such as language and religion (Lopez and Espiritu, 1990). As posed by Junn and Masuoka (2008), unlike the African American community, the Asian American community doesn't share a history of slavery in the U.S. coupled with persisting barriers to mobility that are tied directly to race. Therefore, Asian Americans may not have developed the depth of linkages between racial categorization and life chances in this country. Asian Americans differ greatly from Native Americans in Asian Americans' diverse immigration experiences, ties to home countries, and generationality (Lopez and Espiritu, 1990). Junn and Masuoka (2008) argue that Asian Americans provide a critical and unique case in the study of panethnicity in the context of multiple and layered (and many times competing) identities.

Regardless of the diversity it contains, the Asian American pan-ethnic identity does exist. Using data from the Pilot National Asian American Political Survey (PNAAPS), Lien et al. (2003) found that almost 70% of Asian Americans identify with the collective identification either as their first choice of ethnic category or, if not first, when prompted by a question, they ascribe to the pan-ethnic identity. Census bureau data projects that by 2030, Asian Americans (including both single and mixed race) will comprise over 7% of U.S. population, with a growing number of those being U.S. born, but the majority being immigrants (Ong and Scott, 2008).

Okamoto (2003) developed a theory of panethnicity, which predicts that heightened boundaries between Asian and non-Asian Americans, as modeled by increased (labor) segregation of Asian Americans and increased experiences of prejudice, discrimination, and violence towards Asian Americans, leads to increased pan-ethnic collective action. Okamoto (2003, 2006) also finds in studying organizations that increased occupational segregation of and

threats (political/prejudice/discrimination/violence) to the Asian American community foster the formation of cross-ethnic (involving at least two Asian ethnic groups) organizational coalitions and collaborative efforts. Her findings support the notion that Asian pan-ethnic organizations and collective action efforts form as a means to creating supportive communities, fighting prejudices, and advocating for equal opportunities and collective gains.

Okamoto's theory of panethnicity (2003, 2006, 2010) speaks to the importance of heightened, or *bright* boundaries between Asian American and other ethnic/racial groups in mobilizing the Asian American community. Although she doesn't study the processes of collective identity formation, her studies and findings assume a pan-ethnic identity. She suggests that boundary brightening between Asians and non-Asians increases collective action possibly through the strengthening of the collective identity as a result of increased group interaction, shared economic interests, and a sense of shared experiences and fate (Okamoto, 2003). Therefore, she predicts that pan-ethnic commitment or action is linked to structural or environmental factors that brighten or heighten boundaries between Asian Americans and non-Asian Americans.

Among Native Americans, Nagel (1995) found that positive structural externalities, such as increased political opportunities and resources, and increased proximity, led to a cultural renewal and closer ethnic bonds. A study conducted by Kim and White (2010) found that Asian American panethnicity was only responsive to or activated by residential segregation among immigrants, and not among native-born generations. This distinction between immigrant and non-immigrant Asian American identity remains to be explored at the organizational level.

Consistent with the theory of panethnicity, Junn and Masuoka (2008) find Asian panethnicity to be a latent identity, needing prompting or motivation from contextual and other factors, possibly socio-psychological, such as the activation of group pride. Studies using the Pilot National Asian American Political Survey (PNAAPS), which is representative of both immigrant and native-born Asian Americans, have found that increased experiences of discrimination, English proficiency and increased social interactions are all associated with a stronger sense of panethnicity (Min, 2010; Masuoka, 2006). There is much left to study about what engages or activates panethnicity, especially at an organizational level, as most research has focused on processes or factors influencing activation on an individual level.

In studying panethnicity, and especially in understanding the many tensions involved in coalition building, it is critical to look to theories on the construction of race and ethnicity. Race is socially constructed, and at the same time that it imposes a structure around inequity and injustice, it also provides a modality for identification and representation (Omi, 1994). Kibria (1998) and Park (2008) both discuss the idea of the racialization of Asian American ethnicity, also labeled as lumping (Espiritu, 1992). There is an important debate among scholars about the validity and fairness of the usage of the category Asian American, a racialized pan-ethnic identity, and the position in which the use of the pan-ethnic category places the community within this country's racial hierarchy (Kim, 1999; Kibria; 1998). It would be important to explore these ideas among organizational members of a pan-ethnic coalition and recognize the tensions that arise due to the racialization of Asian American ethnicity.

Similar to race, ethnicity is also considered a social construction and not easily predicted by primordial ties. Nagel (1994) describes ethnicity as an identity plus a form of group

organization that implies agency and structure, the latter of which differentiates it from race. She also identifies ethnicity as inherently political in nature. Wimmer's (2008) framework of ethnicity might be useful in studying Asian panethnicity as it encompasses many levels of diversity within the community. His modeling of ethnicity incorporates subtypes including ethnosomatic (racial), ethnonational, ethnoreligious, ethnoregional, and ethnolinguistic groups. Additionally, his framework establishes that the boundaries around this complex construct of ethnicity are continually being (re)shaped given a variety of internal and external structural constraints and opportunities, including (political) institutions, resources, and networks. This model of ethnicity could be helpful in breaking apart the many facets of panethnicity, and in avoiding inappropriate assumptions in constructing and studying panethnicity.

3. Politicized Collective Identity and Social Movement Organizations

Organizations play a critical role in defining, shaping, constructing, and sustaining collective identities (Gamson, 1996). Organizations, and specifically community organizations, filter and reproduce collective identities, and could be considered "identity homes" (Gamson, 1996, p.258). Organizations themselves, as social movement community structures, sustain movements by retaining a collective identity (or identities) (Staggenborg, 2002).

Social movement organizations (SMOs) provide identity communities with continuity of a politicized collective identity, even when there may not be much public political/social activity or other motivating factors for politicization of the community (Simon, 2011). SMOs engage in identity work in order to align salient personal identities and collective identities within a movement (Snow and McAdam, 2000). Clemens (1996) contends that organizational structure and form is itself an expression and informant of collective identity. Utilizing a feminist and

intersectional perspective on identity, Ward (2008) contends that social movement organizations must engage in “multi-identity work” (pg. 233). This allows for the building of a complex and intersectional collective identity that can be inclusive of conflicting ideologies and identities. Roth’s (2008) study of the Coalition of Labor Union Women (CLUW) shows how an organization acts as a bridge for a diverse membership and manages to support a diverse collective identity, “labor feminism” (p. 215), by creating a coalition structure, with various committees and caucuses representing its diverse membership.

Collective identity in social movement organizations can be both a means and an end. Bernstein (1997) suggests a political identity framework in which identity may generally be used: 1) as a tool for empowerment through providing a raised group consciousness, 2) as a goal in and of itself, i.e., reclaiming, creating, or deconstructing identity; or 3) as a strategy, deployed to critique or educate, and influenced by organizational and political/social context and environment. Additionally, she suggests that the nature of the collective identity itself may serve to influence a movement organization’s strategy, goals, and outcomes, as interests, identities, and organizational structures intersect through complex feedback loops (Bernstein, 2008). A study comparing two instances of trade unions taking up the cause of immigrants’ and women’s rights movements shows that organizational processes and structures as well as overarching institutional logics, or logics of action, impact how identity is deployed by social movement organizations (Yu, 2012).

In his analysis of organizations working within gay and lesbian social movements, Gamson (1995) argues that the collective identity goals of organizations may be different depending on the systems being challenged. A goal of identity tightening (a more fixed identity

construct) may make sense in challenging political institutions and addressing resource issues, but a goal of identity deconstruction (disaggregation) may be called for in challenging social and cultural norms. Gamson (1995) also discusses the idea of advancing social movements through a destabilizing of identities from within. He points out the introduction of queer politics into the then-dominant lesbian and gay movement, and identifying a “deconstructionist politic” (p. 391) - a process that is as important to consider as the formation of fixed, unified, or shared collective identity categories. This need for destabilizing identities is due to the fact that collective identities can be both a source of oppression and a source of power. In his work, Gamson compares this deconstructionism to ethnic essentialism, a psychological construct describing people’s beliefs of an ethnic group having an inalterable nature. In this study, I take from both Gamson’s and Bernstein’s frameworks in broadly categorizing the identity work of pan-ethnic coalition-building as the activation, deployment, AND destabilization of collective identity.

4. Organizational Identity

Important to the study of collective identities and organizations is the consideration of the organizational identity itself. Organizational identities are cognitive structures that convey, both to those internal to and external to the organization, an organization’s nature, belief systems, and future intentions (Albert et al, 2000). Traditionally, organizational identity has been considered as originating from an organization - whole in itself as a collective actor, and distinct from the individual/collective identities of individuals that comprise it. Using this perspective, organizational identity is viewed as stable, enduring, and having shared cognitive

construct/s and interpretive system/s (Whetten, 2006; Albert and Whetten, 1985; see also Cornelisson et al, 2007).

Organization scholars are increasingly looking at the conflicting/unstable nature of collective identity in organizations (Gioia et al, 2000) as in fact adaptive for those organizations. And literature highlights the communicative nature of inter-organizational collaborations and dialectical processes of collective identity re/production in organizations (Koschmann, 2012; Lewis et al, 2010). Therefore, communication and discourse studies are critical in understanding processes of organizational identity construction and deconstruction. Koschmann (2012) contends that organizational identities could be considered to be authoritative text deployed strategically by organizations in achieving their goals. Assertions of organizational identity prevent organizations from straying from their unique character (Whetton, 2006).

5. Framing

Framing in social movements literature and related to mobilization or collective action refers to the production and conveyance of the meaning of concepts and ideas within movements, which includes the conveyance of collective identities (Benford & Snow, 2000; Gamson, 1996). It is often mistaken to be or embody an entire ideology or concept (or in this case, collective identity) itself, but in actuality, frames convey meaningful pieces of larger ideas and concepts. Clemens (1996) argues that organizational form itself can act as a frame and inform the collective identity that is embodied by and the actions taken by the organization.

Most studies of framing in social movements and among non-profit organizations concern themselves with the work of organizations to mobilize individual participants.

Organizations use various framing tactics to help define and reconstruct collective identity and organizational ideologies in order to encourage participation/mobilization in movements.

In his historical analysis, Liu (2008) explores how the construction of the Asian American movement was dependent on more radical ideological frames, and how an increased professionalization and service orientation of Asian American organizations has resulted in frames less activist (contentious) and more institutional (consensual or compliant) in nature, thereby reducing the overall power of Asian American social movements. This reduction in activism concurrent with expansion in service delivery could occur because organizations become more reliant on government and other institutional funding and resources. In the interest of survival and possibly due to co-optation, organizations pivot towards less contentious social movement goals and objectives (Piven and Cloward, 1977).

Frame alignment, or frame resonance, refers to the congruence established between individual and organizational framing of ideologies, beliefs, etc. It is important to note that frames do not necessarily encompass entire ideologies or identities. Frame alignment is seen as a necessary component of successful participation/mobilization (Snow et al, 1986). The various identified processes used to align frames of organizations with individuals include frame bridging (connecting existing groups to frames), amplification (highlighting specific values or beliefs that might 'stoke the flames'), extension (enlarging or encompassing more ideas in a frame), and transformation (shifting definitions of an existing frame) (Benford and Snow, 2000).

Research has shown the importance of aligned frames in organizational collaboration and coalition-building (Nowell, 2009; Gray, 2004). The processes involved in frame alignment for coalition-building, specifically focused on the role of collective identity, have not yet been

explored, judging from the published literature. This study looks at framing processes – specifically those of frame alignment - as a part of the identity work done by a coalition to engage its organizational members in coalition-building and to sustain the coalition.

B. Complexities of Organizations involved in Social Movements

1. Social movements and the centrality of organizations

Social movements have generally been defined as “sustained challenges to powerholders in the name of a disadvantaged population living under the jurisdiction or influence of those powerholders” (Tarrow, 1996, p. 874). Social movements have been vital to the Asian American community since the mid-1800s in establishing and protecting various human and civil rights, in fighting injustice and race-based violence, and in ensuring accurate representation of the diverse community (Low, 2008; Espiritu, 1993).

The study of social movements is multidisciplinary with scholarly work from various schools of thought, including psychology, sociology, organizations, political science, communications, history, and more. “From the social psychological point of view, social movements are collective strategies of social change (or resistance to unwanted social change) as opposed to individual strategies of social mobility (or escape)” (Simon, 2011, p 140).

McCarthy and Zald (1977), in considering the centrality of mobilizing resources (i.e., money, labor, facilities, etc.) to successful social movements, brought to light the importance of social movement organizations (SMO) and the systems and environment in which they operate. An SMO is a “complex, or formal, organization which identifies its goals [change preferences] with a social movement or a countermovement and attempts to implement those goals” (McCarthy and Zald, 1977, p. 1218). The authors situate SMOs in a complex environment of

multiple organizations, or social movement industry, whose goals may be aligned with the SMO. This framework highlights the fact that a social movement may never be fully mobilized.

Tilly and Tarrow (2006) distinguish social movements from general contentious politics. They specify that social movements must have repeated and sustained campaigns and displays of unity and commitment using multiple tactics or repertoires of action, and that these are all supported by organizations and networks. Diani and Bison (2006) clarify the differences between social movement processes and more general processes of collective action, specifying that *social movement processes* are:

...instances of collective action with clear conflictual orientations to specific social and political opponents, conducted in the context of dense inter-organizational networking, by actors linked by solidarities and shared identities that precede and survive any specific coalitions and campaigns. (p. 283)

Important to all the above perspectives defining and distinguishing social movements from general collective action or contentious politics is the centrality of organizations to social movements and the acknowledgement that a social movement is larger than any one single actor, whether organizational or individual.

Although the study of coalitions and inter-organizational relations is quite established, the study of social movement organizational coalitions is relatively new. But these coalitions have been long present in various social movements, including the gay rights, women's, environmental, and civil rights movements (Van Dyke and McCammon, 2010). A social movement coalition involves multiple independent organizational actors and can embody many types of organizational alliances, ranging from simple partnerships or informal collaborations to

more complex and formalized multi-organizational networks and relationships that could involve shared projects and resources. This study adds to the knowledge base organizational coalitions and speaks to the organizational processes and structures involved in the potential activation of a pan-ethnic identity in organizational coalition building.

The Coalition for Asian American Children and Families (CACF), which is the research site for the study, is an umbrella social movement coalition organization that coordinates action with a number of Asian ethnic member organizations – some that are pan-ethnic themselves (i.e., Asian American, South Asian, or Southeast Asian), and some that are specific to one Asian ethnicity (i.e., Chinese, Korean, etc.). This type of structure can be considered a formalized organizational alliance (Van Dyke and McCammon, 2010).

2. Non-Profit Inter-Organizational Collaborations and Social Movement Coalitions

Since the 1980s, scholarship on nonprofit organizational collaborations grew due to external forces such as increasing government privatization and decentralization. Recently, there is a strong promotion of organizational collaboration in both the philanthropic and public sectors. Although multiple studies assess factors of success in organizational collaborations, the collaborations studied are varied and diverse in nature, leading to difficulties in identifying a core set of successful attributes of collaborative activity (Gazley and Guo, 2015).

Within the non-profit landscape, coalition or collaboration research describing the forming and maintaining of community coalitions and collaborations of organizations focuses heavily on the provision of direct human services or health services (Guo and Acar, 2005). Although the coalition I studied is comprised of many direct service organizations, it also includes other types of organizations (See Appendix A: Project CHARGE Organizational and

Individual Staff Representative Participant Characteristics). There is much that remains to be studied regarding social movement and social equity-related organizational coalitions (Staggenborg, 2010).

Galaskiewicz (1985) identified three main organizational motivations to enter into interorganizational relations (IOR): 1) to gain resources and, specifically, to gain power and manage environmental uncertainty; 2) to provide a modality for political advocacy and favorable political standing, including the formation of political coalitions; and 3) to gain organizational legitimacy and be identified with powerful cultural symbols. A major critique of these frameworks is that there is little attention paid to various limitations faced by organizations, such as a lack of ability to strategically choose relationships, for example due to imposed mandates around IOR (Guo and Acar, 2005).

In general, studies of both IOR and social movement coalition-formation have focused on expanding theories stressing the importance of positive environmental conditions, such as plentiful resources and political opportunities – all based on rational actor frameworks (Van Dyke and McCammon, 2010; Guo and Acar, 2005; Barringer and Harrison, 2000). In more recent studies of social movements, including Asian pan-ethnic organizational communities, external socio-political threats (i.e., marginalizing or oppressive policies) have also been shown to facilitate the formation of social movement coalitions (Okamoto, 2010; Almeida, 2010; McCammon and Campbell, 2002).

Literature identifies a number of critical factors that facilitate the sustaining of social movement coalitions, all of which inform my analysis, including: 1) social ties between activists and other actors, which can help overcome certain obstacles such as class or race differences

(Bystydzienski and Schact, 2001); 2) shared ideology, identity and goals, which can be complicated when organizations share goals but differ in ideology or identity, or when they share ideology but have different goals (Van Dyke and McCammon, 2010); 3) political or economic threats, as mentioned earlier, that can motivate coalition formation (Okamoto, 2010; Almeida, 2010); and 4) compatible frames and perceptions of frame compatibility (Koch, 2013; Gray, 2004; Nowell, 2009; Croteau and Hicks, 2003).

Communication scholars argue the importance of communication processes that underlie the factors impacting the formation and sustaining of coalitions. Lewis et al. (2010) contend that communication, or discourse, creates and shapes coalitions. The authors focus on the idea of tension as normal and not necessarily needing resolution during coalition-building. This process-oriented and conflict-centered perspective of organizational coalitions offers an alternative to the traditional rational actor frameworks of power and resource dependency/mobilization, political opportunity structures, and organizational legitimacy. This study is informed by communications scholars in its use of discourse analysis.

Mizrahi and Rosenthal (2001) identify multiple indicators of a coalition's success including goal attainment, legitimacy and recognition by the community and social change target, and sustained networks and longevity of the coalition. The Wilder Collaborations Factor Inventory (Mattessich et al, 2001) assesses 20 factors that influence the success of collaborations, such as legitimacy and political climate, as well as communication, participation, shared purpose, and leadership, although these factors do not necessarily speak to the impact of collaborations in communities. Other studies have identified cooperative relationships as critical to systems-change outcomes, and leadership and decision-making capacities as well as

shared leadership and having learning as a purpose as critical to coalition sustainability (Nowell, 2009; Perrault et al, 2011). A public health-focused review of literature on community coalitions found a few indicators of coalition effectiveness in both functioning and in achieving community-level change, including formalization of procedures, member participation and diversity, and group cohesion (Zakocs and Edwards, 2006).

Overall, there is a general positive tone applied to organizational collaborations, across academic, nonprofit, philanthropic, and public sectors. As pointed out by Gazley and Guo (2015) in their comprehensive review of literature on nonprofit collaborations, “previous scholarship, in its quest for normative and dominant models, has also not always succeeded at addressing some inherent conflicts of collaborative frameworks” (p. 3). The authors also point out that most research around nonprofit collaborations focus on the preconditions for and outcomes of organizational collaboration – not on the process and dynamics, or the questions of how collaborations are sustained. Additionally, they find that organizational theories dominate studies of nonprofit collaboration. This study attempts to fill in a few of these gaps in focusing in on discursive moments, including moments of tension, in studying coalition-building processes. The incorporation of collective identity theories into this study of an organizational coalition utilizes theoretical avenues outside of the heavily used organizational theories in the study of nonprofit and human service organizational collaborations.

3. Complexities of Organizations and Social Movements

Staggenborg (2002) argues that social movements are in fact meso-level phenomena – with organizations providing an indispensable link to understanding the connections between micro and macro levels of social movements. Organizational theories have been commonly

applied to the study of social movements. Resource mobilization (McCarthy and Zald, 1977) speaks to the idea of structural factors (resources such as funding or labor) that might drive organizational form and function. Using this perspective, a collective identity such as Asian American itself can be viewed as a resource (Hunt and Benford, 2007), as could the various frames of collective identity.

It has been hypothesized that as organizations focus on survival, they change their goals to best fit with their resource environments (Campbell, 2005). In her study on cross-ethnic collaboration, Okamoto (2010) found that in times of limited resources, ethnic groups choose to turn inward and focus on their own issues instead of forming cross-ethnic collaborations. Gamson (1996), applying a neo-institutional focus, found a type of organizational isomorphism or a tendency to develop structural similarity between two divergent LGBT groups that resulted from both organizations contending with a constrained pool of resources.

Political process theory and the idea of political (Tilly & Tarrow, 2007) and cultural opportunity structures (Gamson, 1996) are helpful in assessing the various opportunities and threats that may be influencing organizational form, practice, and function and shaping and deploying of the Asian American collective identity. In their case studies, Otis (2001), in looking at a pan-Asian ethnic service organization, and Ward (2008), in studying various LGBT organizations, provide examples of how organizations reinforce societal inequalities and replicate dominant (and oppressive) ideologies involving gender-norms ethnic favoritism, and other discriminatory patterns due to political and social influences. In a recent study, Chin (2014) found that an Asian American pan-ethnic coalition that focused on health access and was comprised mostly of service providing agencies did not use contentious tactics or focus on

goals involving fundamental systemic changes, possibly because of dependencies on systemic resources. Still, the coalition was effective in engaging in advocacy to improve the community's access to healthcare under existing healthcare legislation.

Theoretical perspectives, such as resource mobilization and political process, are useful in exploring the various structural factors influencing the potential activation of panethnicity among organizational members of a pan-ethnic social movement coalition. They can be helpful in understanding the various organizational processes and structures that a coalition develops, how identity is deployed by the coalition, and how the coalition chooses to address the differences in the construction of panethnicity across organizational members.

C. Current research: Asian American Panethnicity and Organizational Coalition-building

Asian American scholars agree on the central role Asian American pan-ethnic organizations played and continue to play in the rise and continual growth of Asian American panethnicity (Vo, 2004; Lien, 2001; Espiritu, 1992). Organizations re/de/construct and activate the Asian American collective identity, which could encourage mobilization of the community. Existing research has not studied in depth the organizational identity re/de/construct and activation in social movement organizational coalitions. Although there is some research that explores the activation of Asian panethnicity at the individual level, there is very little research on organizational level processes that contribute to the activation of panethnicity.

This study follows Staggenborg's (2010) call for more study of the internal organizational processes and structures that allow for the mobilization of resources, cooperation of leadership, and shared strategies across diverse groups. It also follows Bernstein's (2008) call for the need for further study of the connections between identity deployment (strategy) and

organizational structure – namely how and what organizational structures may limit, enable, and influence the use of various identity strategies.

This study focuses on the central idea of deconstruction or destabilization as critical to forming a collective identity (Gamson, 1995). I apply various concepts of collective identity, panethnicity, social movement organizations and organizational identities, and social movement organizational coalitions in this study of identity work, or the activation, deployment, and destabilization of pan-ethnic identity by a social movement coalition organization. I intend to extend existing theories around identity work as they apply to pan-ethnic organizational coalition-building.

In the next chapter, I build upon the theoretical bases outlined in this review of literature, and explain the methods employed in this study. I introduce and describe the use of critical discourse analysis, which allows for a focus on processes through the analysis of discursive moments, including moments of tension or conflict, during coalition-building processes.

CHAPTER 3: METHODS

A. Research questions and analysis methods overview

Using critical discourse analysis of a case study, I explore if and how collective identity is utilized (specifically, how it is deployed, and activated and/or destabilized) in non-profit organizational coalition-building. I focus my study on Project CHARGE (Coalition for Health Access to Reach Greater Equity), an organizational coalition (referred to in this study as the “coalition”), which is coordinated and sponsored by a non-profit organization Coalition for Asian American Children and Families (CACF).

My *central research question* is whether and how collective (ethnic) identity/ies are deployed, and how collective identity is activated and/or destabilized in organizational coalition-building. Sub-questions I also explore in my research include:

- What is the nature of the coalition organization being studied? Does it operate as a social movement organization and if so, how?
- How is coalition-building conducted? What, if any, are the processes involved?
- If identity is deployed (and specifically pan-ethnic identity), how so and how is it being framed?
 - If identity frames are received by coalition member organizations, how so and how are they interpreted?
 - Is there any level of resonance/alignment or conflict between identity frames deployed by the coordinating organization or within the social context and those received/interpreted by coalition members?

- Are member organizations' identities activated during coalition-building efforts? If so, which identities and how (including collective, organizational, or other identities)?
- If collective ethnic identity is destabilized in coalition-building, how so and what is the impact?

In order to acknowledge the various tensions and complexities in discourse and organizational life, Broadfoot et al (2008) suggest maintaining a similar level of tension and complexity in the study and analysis of organizations by considering instances of discursive practices as “moments” that might be in conflict/resistance with other moments; that are informed by earlier moments; and that provide the context for future moments. Using this framework allows for the analysis to view specific discourse at multiple levels– individual, organizational, and social, as well as recognize shifting balances, competition, and the generation and/or closure of certain discourses. *Discursive moments of identity work are my unit of analysis.* As I lay out below, I coded for these moments in my analysis of my observations, interviews, and textual reviews.

Identity work, which generally means the activities engaged in by an entity to sustain an identity, has been used by organizational scholars and is helpful in understanding organizational processes, but carries no single or set definition (Brown, 2014). I use various theoretical frameworks to conceptualize identity work in this study. All of those frameworks are explained in the review of literature. I attempt to clarify my specific use in this study of the concept of identity work – including deployment, activation and destabilization - in Section C below titled, “Critical concepts and the theories informing them”.

In this study, I observed discursive moments of identity work during interviews, observations, and textual analysis. I especially focus in on moments of tension in identity work, which are critical moments where identity deployment, activation or destabilization are likely to be observed. I observed moments of identity work within structures and processes of varying layers of the coalition, including: 1) the coalition Project CHARGE itself as an organizational entity (with its own informal structures and processes); 2) the interactional dynamics among and between various coalition member organizations, through their organizational representatives (meso-meso relationships); 3) the dynamics between the coalition and the coordinating agency, CACF and 4) the connections between the coalition and the larger social/political/cultural environment (meso-macro interplay).

B. Research Context

The selection of Project CHARGE as a case is based on theory and convenience. It serves as a critical case (Flyvberg, 2006) and is important to the study of coalition-building processes and structures across ethnic diversity, specifically pan-ethnic diversity. CACF is the only pan-Asian advocacy coalition organization in New York City. It is also the nation's only pan-Asian advocacy organization dedicated to children and families (see: www.cacf.org). The organization is located in New York City, which has a large and growing Asian American population (over 15%) and a number of Asian ethnic/pan-ethnic organizations, and CACF is a hub for pan-ethnic collective activity.

Project CHARGE is focused on health equity as an issue, which is also very relevant to the political and social context of the past 10+ years, especially given the advent of the

Affordable Care Act, or Obamacare. Project CHARGE is therefore situated in a place and time when the issue around healthcare access is of significant importance.

Engaging all member organizations of Project CHARGE allowed for a thorough exploration of the role, if any, of collective identity in coalition-building, including potential tensions and conflicts across the organizational diversity. It also allowed for exploration across a diversity of organizations, of different sizes, missions, locations around the City, and resource and political/cultural environmental constraints.

C. Critical concepts and the theories informing them

As mentioned, the focus of my study, through using observations, interviews, and textual reviews, was on organizational (coalitional) processes/strategies and structures. Following are some of the definitions of critical concepts.

Organizational processes observed include but are not limited to: frame generation and deployment, as well as the perception and uptake of frames (Johnston, 2002; Nowell, 2010); organizational learning and decision-making; and the use of discourse, including rhetoric, dialogue, and narrative (Grant et al, 2004).

Organizational structures observed include, but are not limited to: level of formalization, rules of operation and engagement, codified processes and mission, membership roles, and leadership (Lewis et al, 2010). Additionally, observations of organizational limitations were also made. The study takes a multi-perspectival orientation (Snow and Trom, 2002), recognizing multiple organizational realities and that social movement organizations are embedded in a multiorganizational fields (Hunt at al, 1994).

In this study, I view *organizational identities*, including those of the coalition, as both pre-constructed and therefore somewhat structured and also as dynamic and fluid discursive processes. Organizational identities are constantly made and re-made in the various forms of organizational language, text, and communication, with structures and processes capable of influencing each other. This perspective is appropriate especially when looking at an innovative coalition that follows no previously prescribed path, and that is developed within a culture where “practices do not follow rules; rather rules follow evolving practices” (Wynne, 1988, p. 153).

Collective *identity deployment*, which refers to the use of identity as a tool for empowerment, is understood using the following theoretical processes:

- Identity as a group consciousness, which can be used to critique or to educate (Bernstein, 2009; Bernstein, 1997)
- Creation of the organizational entity as an identity home, itself defining, shaping, and constructing collective identities (Gamson, 1996)
- Identity expressed through organizational structure and form (Clemens, 1996)
- Consolidation (of more than one) and transformation (conversion from one to another) of identities (Snow and McAdam, 2000).

Collective *identity activation*, a component of identity work highlighted in this study, is critical to recruitment, retention, participation, and mobilization of coalition members.

Activation of identity also promotes the formation of organizational coalitions (Okamoto, 2006). Collective identity activation is understood using the following theoretical processes:

- Politicization of identity: Growing a group consciousness (shared grievances and struggles for power, and attributions of blame) and feelings of solidarity; promoting a dual identity - the identification with a minority-group while also feeling a part of a larger polity, host nation, or society (Azzi, 2011; Chrysochoou and Lyons, 2011; Simon, 2011; Klandermans et al, 2008; Simon and Klandermans, 2001).
- Identity amplification (Snow and McAdam, 2000): Increasing the salience of an identity that thereby increases the likelihood of engaging in collective action around that identity.
- Experiences of isolation, exclusion, or segregation along ethnic community-lines, and threats (political/policy-related threats, threats to pull resources, acts of prejudice, discrimination, and/or violence). These circumstances highlight the boundaries between Asian Americans and others (mainstream society), and therefore may serve to activate the pan-ethnic identity (Okamoto, 2006; Okamoto, 2003).

Collective *identity destabilization* is understood in this study through the following theoretical processes:

- Conflicts between collective identities (Ward, 2008)
- Collective identity deconstruction or destabilization, or the breaking of a collective identity into different subgroups or factions (Gamson, 1995)
 - Destabilizing forces, informed by work on individual-level identity work, include self-doubt and insecurity, in this case applied to collective identity (Brown, 2014)

- Inconsistencies or tensions around collective identity constructions (including actions such as privileging, stereotyping, appropriating, and degrading)
- Resistance towards identities or identity processes

In this study, *framing processes* are viewed as part of the identity work engaged in by the organizational coalition being studied. I focus on examining instances of frame resonance or alignment among coalition members, including the convening organization that often drives the framing used by the coalition. Framing processes are considered part of the observations of discursive moments of identity work, and include:

- Alignment: frame bridging, amplification, extension, and transformation (Benford and Snow, 2000)
- Compatibility of frames with one another, or the perception of frame compatibility (Koch, 2013; Gray, 2004; Nowell, 2009; Croteau and Hicks, 2003)

D. Case Study and Discourse Analysis

My research employs critical discourse analysis of a case study to explore if and how collective and organizational identity is utilized (specifically, looking at identity work - how identity is deployed, and activated and/or destabilized) in non-profit organizational coalition-building in social movement spaces. *My analysis extends relevant theories around the utilization of collective identity, specifically an Asian American pan-ethnic identity, in organizational coalition-building in social movement spaces.* As mentioned earlier, I focus my analysis on the various discursive moments of identity work observed through interviews, observations, and a review of documents (units of analysis).

Discourse, including conversation/dialogue, narrative/stories, rhetoric, and tropes, is viewed as a form of social constructionism, or the creating, reproducing, and reflecting of social reality (Grant et al, 2004). Discourse in the form of language/text, symbols, and images, can be mapped out and analyzed (Johnston, 2002). Discourse analysis is beneficial in studying organizational structures and processes in coalition-building because discourse is itself involved in constructing and shaping organizational processes, structures, and relationships (Grant et al, 2004).

I do not limit my study to exploring the day-to-day understandings and micro-level dialogue within an organization, but broaden my focus to understanding various contextual factors that are embedded in discourse. Critical discourse analysis (CDA) links texts, practices, processes, and social-political contexts. Employing CDA allows for the exploration of intertextuality, or looking not only at language itself, but who or what uses that language, and how, when, and why the language is used. If not using CDA, the study of discourse risks reifying ideas – for example, a study seeking to explore how discourse leads to shared identities can easily predetermine that identity. My methods outline below attempt to consciously prevent the predetermination of any specific collective identity, including Asian panethnicity.

Applied to organizational coalition-building, the study of discourse can span grand world-historical discourses such as civil rights, women's rights, gay rights, religiosity, etc.; organizational-level discourses, specifically the study of organizational processes, structures, and the idea of frames and frame-alignment; and individual-level production of text/linguistic discourse analysis. I am interested in the first two levels of discourse – world/historical and organizational – as they impact the activation of identity in organizational coalition-building.

As discussed in the literature review, the ideas of frames and framing processes are critical to the activation and deployment of identity in organizations. Frames are viewed as cognitive schemas, ordered somewhat hierarchically, and generated by actors, whether at the organizational- or individual-level (Johnston, 2002). Johnston (2002) describes frames as: 1) having content; 2) being cognitive structures; 3) being both individual and shared/collective; 4) being both fixed and emergent; and 5) based on text/language/etc. Frames are, in essence, comprised of similar elements to discourse and therefore are suited to be studied using discourse analysis.

The study also incorporates the idea of competing discourses. Gamson (1995) discusses the progressing of social movements through the destabilizing of identities from within, a process that is important to consider in exploring the formation and deployment of shared identity categories.

Another idea incorporated into my analysis is that of interdiscursivity (Ainsworth and Hardy, 2004), which refers to the idea that broader (or grand) discourses serve to (re)produce power and knowledge that then structures, constrains, orders, and/or limits discourse, such as organizational discourse. This concept of interdiscursivity is based on a Foucauldian perspective and can lend itself to looking at ideas of agency and resistance within various organizational discourses and realities. The concept is relevant to the study of ethnic identity-based coalition-building. Discourses within the coalition that shape organizational processes and structures interact with, can conflict with, and are potentially shaped and limited by grand discourses and the socio-political environment. I also examine resistance and assertion of organizational agency in framing collective pan-ethnic identity across the varying levels of discourse. Studying

conflicts, tensions/resistance, and the destabilization of collective identities acknowledges that these identities are both a source of oppression and a source of power (Gamson, 1995).

The discursive case study methodology is also informed by Burawoy's (2009) extended case method, especially his ideas of extending analysis from process to social forces. This methodological framework is useful as it allows for entry into a field/case with a theoretical basis and with the understanding that the case is an example of one where theorized socio/political/cultural forces and institutions are involved. My study is also informed by postmodern and multiperspectival orientations (Snow and Trom, 2002), recognizing that there are multiple organizational realities within a complex organization and that social movement organizations are embedded in multiorganizational fields (Hunt et al, 1994). In fact, the case I study is itself a multiorganizational field with the coalition being an organizational entity itself comprised of multiple member organizations.

In addition to using discourse analysis and concepts of interdiscursivity to inform methodology, the meso-macro (organization-environment) relationship is further understood using a framework suggested by Diane Vaughan (2010) in observing organizational failure, which she employed in her study of the Challenger Space Shuttle crash. She proposes exploring the competitive (organizational field), organizational (structures, cultures, and processes), and regulatory environmental factors influencing organizational form and function, and the resulting organizational behaviors. Although organizational failure is not the focus of this study, this framework is helpful to understanding potential limitations, conflicts and competition in various coalitional structures and processes and their relation to the re/de/construction and activation of collective identity within the coalition.

E. Study Design: Methods and Procedures

Case studies enable the researcher to use multiple methods of research (Yin, 2008). My methods in the field will include observations, interviews, and document (or textual) reviews. Credibility of the research work will be ensured through efforts including, but not limited to: extended length of researcher engagement in the field; triangulation of data across methods; involvement of participants in review of the findings; and the provision of clear analysis frameworks and coding definitions (described in Section C: Critical concepts and theories informing them).

I spent approximately 14 months in the field, beginning in October, 2015 and concluding in November, 2016. During this time period, my methods included: 1) one-on-one interviews of CACF Project CHARGE (Coalition for Health Access to Reach Greater Equity) staff/interns and all but one member organization staff (one organization didn't respond to participation requests), 2) observations of various coalition meetings, planning sessions, and events, totaling approximately 30 hours, and 3) project-related document reviews (both retrospective and generated through the time I spent in the field).

Project CHARGE membership represents organizations identifying as service, advocacy, research, and other types of organizations. Additionally, they represent organizations aimed to specifically benefit different Asian ethnic communities as well as mainstream social service organizations serving the general population (See Appendix A: Project CHARGE Organizational and Individual Staff Representative Participant Characteristics).

Interviews: I interviewed all organizational staff involved with the Project CHARGE coalition from the coordinating agency as well as member agencies, except one organization

that did not respond to multiple requests for an interview. In total, I conducted 16 interviews with 15 participants, between one and three hours each, all of which were audio recorded and transcribed verbatim for analysis. Participants for this study include CACF (Coalition for Asian American Children and Families) staff involved in Project CHARGE. I interviewed four CACF staff including the Policy Director who coordinates Project CHARGE (interviewed twice), Health Policy Coordinator, and CACF Executive Directors (I interviewed one executive directors and one interim executive director, as there were a few leadership transitions through my time in the field).

Key informants interviewed for this study included staff representing all, but one, member organizations of the Project CHARGE coalition. I was able to briefly reach out through email and phone and speak to one former CHARGE partner organization that chose to end their relationship with Project CHARGE (in total, four organizations have chosen to leave the coalition in the years it has existed.)

Individual and Organizational Participant Overview: Individual participant demographics collected include age, ethnic identity, gender identity, generational status (in U.S.), educational level and professional background/experience, length of time as staff in organization, and length of involvement in Project CHARGE. Individual participants range from age 27 to 81; all identify ethnically with an individual Asian ethnic identity, but none identify primarily as Asian American. Most participants are female and all are either immigrants or children of immigrants.

Organizational information collected includes total staff size, organizational budget, type of work engaged in by organization, target population/beneficiaries, and length of

organizational involvement in Project CHARGE. Most organizational members of the coalition are direct service providers, with some research institutions. Member organizations range from small community-based organizations to settlement houses to large hospitals and research institutions. Please see Appendix A: Project CHARGE Organizational and Individual Staff Representative Participant Characteristics.

Interview Process: Please see Appendix B: Interview Guide, which was used to conduct semi-structured interviews with all participants. Questions were similar for all interviews but adjusted for CACF staff and for key informant interviews. The interview guide was reviewed with former staff of CACF who are familiar with Project CHARGE but who are no longer affiliated with CACF or Project CHARGE. Interviews took approximately one and a half (1.5) to two (2) hours.

In framing the objectives of my research to all participants, I explained my interest in studying factors that influence organizational coalition-building generally with no mention of my interest in the role of collective ethnic identity in coalition-building, so as not to bias participant responses. Again, during one-on-one interviews, I avoided volunteering or suggesting concepts around identity. Rather, I explored any and all identity cues that I heard from the participants themselves. If identity, and specifically pan-ethnic identity, was not brought up for duration of the one-on-one interview, I did suggest it at the end of the interview as a question around the role of identity in coalition-building and elicit responses. There was only one interview in which I felt I had to bring up the concept myself.

Recruitment: As CACF had agreed to participate in this study, the staff who were involved with Project CHARGE all agreed to be interviewed. Additionally, CACF staff helped

facilitate the recruitment of Project CHARGE member organization interviewees by allowing me to connect with participants face-to-face through monthly meetings. The CACF staff coordinator of Project CHARGE shared information about my study and let coalition members know that she herself is participating fully in this study, in order to encourage members to participate.

I reached out to set up appointments for interviews through email and phone calls to member organization staff representatives, in which I introduced myself and the study and asked for their participation in the interview process. Interviews were scheduled whenever convenient for the participant and at locations that assured their privacy (a closed office, closed conference room, or restaurant where it was easy to have a private conversation). Recruitment was very easy due to my access to and acceptance from the group.

Informed Consent: The informed consent form was reviewed with participants at the start of each interview (see Appendix C: Informed Consent Form for Interviews). Potential participants were allowed to ask questions before signing the form. The audio recording of interviews is discussed through the informed consent process and were specifically initialed in gaining consent. All interviewees provided consent for audio recording.

Observations included the following events over the course of my time in the field. All observations were of meetings were audio recorded and transcribed verbatim for analysis. I observed only two larger events (a rally and a lobby day) and wrote down notes immediately after the event. Observations included:

- Monthly coalition meetings (attendees include CACF staff and CHARGE member organization staff)

- Strategic planning meetings (attendees include CACF staff, CHARGE member organization staff, evaluation researchers, and group facilitators)
- Policy/advocacy meetings and events (attendees include CACF staff, CHARGE member staff, various organizational allies, and policy or organizational change targets)

Observation Process: Observations of coalition meetings took place at various organizations' offices – mostly where Project CHARGE monthly meetings were held. Observations also took place at rallies and gatherings and meetings in front of or inside government buildings. In all cases excluding observation of events open to the public, meeting/event attendees were alerted to my observation of meetings through email reminders sent by Project CHARGE staff before the meetings.

Informed Consent: Consent for my observations was gained verbally. At the start of each meeting observation I identified myself, briefly re-introduced my purpose for attending, and asked if there were any objections to my attendance or to my recording of the meetings. Participants also understood that they could indicate to me if they wanted me to turn off the recording at meetings. At only one meeting where personal opinions were shared about organizations not in the room did I voluntarily pause my audio recording.

There were never any objections to my attendance at meetings and I was never asked to refrain from note-taking. After rallies where it was difficult to take notes, I set aside time to document notes the evening of the event.

Finally, I conducted a **review of Project CHARGE documents** and materials made available to me at the time of my field research. These documents spanned from the coalition's early years in 2007-2008 (retrospective), to more recent materials made available to me.

Documents were culled from the internet and were also voluntarily released to me for the purposes of review for this study. Relevant text was isolated for analysis. Documents included:

- Evaluations and strategy documents
- Articles, policy briefs, advocacy agendas
- Meeting agendas and minutes
- Talking points and presentations created about Project CHARGE
- Publications or manuscripts about Project CHARGE submitted to peer reviewed journals
- Grant applications/reports

F. Field access and Ethics

Before entering the field, I had already established trust with the Coalition for Asian American Children and Families (CACF) because I was a former staff member from 2001 – 2004 as Child Welfare Policy and program Coordinator and have been a long-time supporter of the organization. I had never been involved with Project CHARGE, the coalition on which my study focused. CACF agreed to allow me to conduct my dissertation research on organizational coalition-building with Project CHARGE (Coalition for Health Access to Reach Greater Equity). The CACF staff in charge of Project CHARGE signed an agreement letter for participation in this research (See Appendix D: Organizational Consent). All member organizations of Project CHARGE were made aware of my research involvement by the Director of Project CHARGE through email and also in person at meetings before my field work began.

In August of 2015 and at the start of my fieldwork, I held an informational session with the Project CHARGE Director to better understand the coalition. Specifically, I was able to begin learning about the various strategies of coalition-building used by Project CHARGE as well as

the history and inception of the coalition, including the original member organizations, in order to better understand coalition-building efforts. Additionally, at the initial meeting I was able to review my involvement and role as a researcher, and confirm my access to Project CHARGE meetings/events and documents. CACF staff also confirmed their commitment to my study and were able to provide feedback on the overall focus of the study to ensure relevance to the field.

In order to ensure that my prior relationships and knowledge of the community aren't overly coloring my research, I built in tools for reflexivity through using personal memos to document my thoughts and question my perspectives. Issues I explored through the research memos included:

- Instances of identity- or other community-related politics and my responses
- How my own ethnic or other identities might be performed and responded to
- How my experience and knowledge of community might be performed, enter into the dialogue, elicit response from coalition members.

Overall, as documented in my research logs, my knowledge of the community, of the coordinating organization CACF, and of various issues faced by the Asian American community played a role in the field. It served to create a research environment where I was welcomed and where my input was valued as a participant – I quickly became participant observer and was readily given access to people, information, and organizations, with little question. At one point in time, I volunteered my time in assisting the coalition with a project, and although that project didn't pan out, all coalition members knew of my willingness to help. People seemed to be more at ease to talk to me once I reminded them that I was an independent researcher. At

times I was asked to confirm whether the interview was confidential in not sharing names, and I was able to tell people that I wouldn't share their names.

In many instances, coalition members were able to discuss with me community politics and identity politics, as well as talk about various organizations and histories of relationships within the Asian American community, because I was somewhat familiar with the players involved. Again, I believe that this allowed participants to feel more open with me as they shared various concerns and vulnerabilities of the coalition and of CACF. In some instances, interviews with participants extended into observations of their personal and professional worlds. In one instance, I was invited to an educational group in one member organization. In many instances, I was given tours of member organization sites and introduced to various co-workers on site. In one instance I was welcomed into a members neighborhood where they shared stories of their personal life.

I was conscious not to bring my own ethnic identity into conversations within the coalition or in interviews, unless it pertained to sharing my interests in studying an Asian American coalition or being involved in CACF. It is clear that all members identified me as Asian American, and South Asian to be more specific. My gender identity may have also played a role in some of my interactions. In one interview, a member specifically talked about how she was comfortable within the coalition because she saw it as mainly female participants.

G. Researcher Role Transition: Positionality

My fieldwork with the Project CHARGE coalition continued through the beginning of November 2016, after which my role in regards to CACF began to shift. I decided to apply along with a colleague to become Co-Executive Director of CACF, and we officially made our interests

known to the board of directors of CACF at the end of November, 2016. At the time, CACF was being led by an Interim Executive Director. My reasons for applying for this position were many, including my love for and dedication to the Asian American community throughout my years of work as a social worker, which grew through the years of my work as a researcher.

During the course of my fieldwork with Project CHARGE, I witnessed two Executive Director transitions at the Coalition for Asian American Children and Families (CACF). Additionally, there were two Executive Director transitions shortly before I began my fieldwork. Transitions and instability in leadership at CACF had taken its toll on the larger organization. Coupled with the U.S. presidential election in November 2016, I became increasingly determined to dedicate myself to advocating for the Asian American community and returning to work at CACF. I discussed with a few members of my dissertation committee about my interest in the position and got feedback on how best to: 1) handle a possible transition from researcher to staff, 2) ensure the integrity and maintenance of ethical standards in my research – namely to ensure that I complete my data analysis and generate my findings BEFORE I shift my role to become staff, and 3) develop a timeline that I might propose to the CACF board so I could make sure to finish all of my analysis prior to becoming staff.

I attended my last meeting with Project CHARGE partners on November 9th – the day after the election. My Co-ED colleague and I first met in-person with the four-member Executive Committee of the CACF board on November 23rd to share our interest and vision in applying for the position. I made it very clear to all parties involved that I was a researcher at the time, and that I would not share any information garnered through my study of Project CHARGE or CACF in the interview/hiring process. At that time, we were also told by the Board

of CACF to keep our application for the position confidential. Therefore, I did not alert any members of the Project CHARGE coalition of my intentions or application. We were not made privy to any information on the organization.

The CACF Board officially interviewed us at the end of January, 2017 and decided to hire us in February 2017, with our start date as April 24, 2017. Throughout the process, we were still not made privy to any information about the organization and I did not share any information that I gathered with the Board. We were reminded not to release any information about this decision to anyone in the community until a formal transition plan was developed.

Unfortunately, I was not aware that Project CHARGE coalition members were alerted in December 2016 by CACF staff about our application and were told in early February about the Board's selection of my colleague and I to be Co-Executive Directors of CACF. Around December 2016, I did notice that I was taken off of all listserves and group communications of Project CHARGE. I alerted the CACF Board and also respected their wishes for me to maintain confidentiality around the process.

I continued with my transcription and analysis of data through the winter/early spring and successfully completed all of my analysis by mid-April, 2017. I had already determined and written about my key findings before I joined CACF as a Co-Executive Director. As I had discussed with a few of my committee-members, I was very conscious about completing my data entry/transcription and analysis before I began as staff at CACF.

When I began my tenure as Co-Executive Director and around May, 2017, I realize the level of concern and feelings of betrayal from Project CHARGE coalition members, who had known of my transition but who I had not informed myself. At a Project CHARGE meeting that I

attended in May, 2017, coalition members stated directly to me that they felt betrayed and that they had thought that I should have disclosed my intentions and application to be CACF Co-Executive Director. One member expressed their feeling that they thought I was a trusted friend and that I betrayed that trust. They also felt strongly that they should have been better represented in the board's decision-making processes around the leadership transition at CACF.

The next few months proved to be a very difficult time period for me as a researcher and as a staff of CACF. I grappled with the backlash from angry coalition members and an organization in much more disarray than we had expected. My integrity on all fronts was questioned. I attempted, as much as was appropriate, to share my work, my research methods and ethical standards with those who questioned me. Through the first four months of my time as Co-Executive Director, I lost some of my attention and ability to focus on the work of writing my dissertation. I immersed myself in the work of stabilizing CACF and put off writing.

With a lot of support from my advisor and my family, friends and colleagues, in August I began to return to my dissertation with an intentional focus on my prior analysis and findings. I felt strongly that I should continue with my plans and share my findings and analysis directly with Project CHARGE coalition members, in order to hone them and get the group's feedback.

I was invited to present my research and findings to Project CHARGE in September 2017, which helped redirect my focus to my dissertation. I felt confident in my analysis and that my findings remained consistent through my transition from researcher to staff. My presentation to Project CHARGE, to my surprise, went smoothly and resulted in some valuable feedback on how I describe some of my findings.

Many Project CHARGE coalition members have since approached me to discuss my research and have found it to be helpful in their planning for the coalition. I have also been presented parts of those findings at two other conferences: 1) Building Coalitions & Coalescing a Pan-Asian/Pacific/American Identity, a conference of the AAARI (Asian American/Asian Research Institute), CUNY, and 2) the Asian American Community Development Conference of AAFE (Asian Americans for Equality). Each presentation of my research has helped me to grow increasingly familiar with my findings, how to explain them, and the pieces that are most relevant to coalition-building within the Asian American community.

Currently, there are some lingering feeling of betrayal among the coalition members about my role as a researcher and by my taking up a position as Co-Executive Director, but that has dissipated. I have come to a place of understanding and confidence in the integrity of my methods and data analysis.

H. Methodological challenges and modifications

I encountered a few challenges in my methodology through this study. First, I realized after a few interviews that I should create interview prompts that are targeted to guide a dialogue around collective identity without suggesting pan-ethnic identity itself. Therefore, I added a prompt, "How would you describe the group identity of Project CHARGE? You can start with 'Project CHARGE is...'" . This prompt began to create more meaningful interviews that broached ideas of collective identities within the group. I was able to use this prompt for all but two interviews.

Another challenge I faced was in maintaining my role as a researcher within Project CHARGE. Because of my past affiliation with CACF, the coordinating/lead organization, and

although I tried to clarify my role periodically, many member organization staff continued to identify me as part of CACF. At times I felt like they believed I might be able to influence the group as an evaluator of the group might. I transitioned from observer to participant observer quite rapidly. For example, during one coalition meeting when CACF coordinating staff was late, the group asked me for guidance on whether to start and who can coordinate. At that point, I let the group know that I wasn't involved in the coordinating organization and I tried to be helpful as a participant of the coalition. It didn't surprise me that they asked me given my relationship with CACF.

I. Confidentiality/Data Security

Audio files, transcripts, and any written notes were numbered/coded so that no names are attached directly to them. All electronic audio files, notes, and transcripts were stored on a USB memory device that will remain secure in my home study. A digital voice recorder was used onsite to record interviews and meetings, and all data was transferred from the voice recorder to the USB memory device at regular intervals (after data collection). Subsequently, the voice recorder was periodically erased. Paper notes collected were stored along with the USB memory device.

All files and documents will be destroyed once their use for research is exhausted, no more than five (5) years after the conclusion of this project. Only the researchers (primary investigator and doctoral student) involved in this study have access to any of the interview data and any information that might identify organizational or individual participants.

All interviews were conducted in locations that afford the researcher and participant privacy (closed offices, conference rooms, or restaurants where conversations were non-

discernable to other patrons). All interview data was transcribed using initials and numbered, so as not to be linked to a staff person by name. During meeting observations, the researcher ascertained permission to use an audio recorder. Participants were given the option at the start of all interviews and meetings observed to specify to the researcher if they want to say anything off-the-record. If participants stated their wish to say something off-the-record, the researcher would pause both her note-taking and audio recording. This happened during one observation and one interview.

In all reports produced from this research, individual participants (staff) and the specific organizations that they represent are NOT identified. As much as possible, the researcher protected the privacy of all participants by removing information that can enable readers to identify individual participants.

J. Approaches to data analysis

Analysis of data was ongoing through the study and was guided by a critical discourse analysis. The following approaches were utilized through the analysis of the data. Much of the ongoing analysis was aided through the use of research logs where I began to isolate themes that I could use in analysis, as I conducted my fieldwork. The following approaches helped guide my analysis:

- Maintaining a level of tension and complexity by considering instances of discursive practices as *moments* that might be in conflict/resistance with other moments; that are informed by earlier moments; and that provide the context for future moments. Using this framework allowed for the analysis to view specific discursal moments at multiple levels–

individual, organizational, and social, as well as recognize shifting balances, competition, and the generation and/or closure of certain discourses. (Broadfoot et al, 2008)

- Focusing on interdiscursivity (Fairclough, 2005; Ainsworth and Hardy, 2004). Broader discourses (and pre-constructed discourses and realities) serve to (re)produce power and knowledge that then structures, constrains, orders, and/or limits discourse (dynamic/process/agency).
- Exploring the possibilities of how discourse and discursive moments may emerge in the field (informed by Fairclough, 2005)
 - Emergence of new discourses (including recontextualizing and reweaving existing discourses) – possibly limited by structural factors
 - How discourse fits into the strategies of coalition-building to effect change
 - Contradictions, struggles, power dynamics between competing discourses; discourse as power/resource (see organizations as sites of struggle, and as reflecting various structural and environmental factors)
 - Internalization of external discourses (colonization or appropriation)
 - Materialization or enactment of discourses in organizational operations
 - How discourse brings about domination/oppression or invokes practices perpetuating domination/oppression

Credibility of the analysis was ensured through comparing data gathered through various methods – interviews, observations, and document reviews. Additionally, credibility was also ensured through ongoing discussion of emerging findings with faculty sponsors. Finally, credibility of the analysis was ensured through presentation of findings to Project

CHARGE organizational members in September 2017, and the incorporation of feedback into the presentation of the study's overall findings.

K. Coding and Analytical Software

I used Atlas.ti to aid in the analysis of my data, in order to isolate themes and code according to those themes. Atlas.ti was mostly used to analyze transcribed data from interviews and coalition meetings. It is important to note that use of this software was not the sole vehicle for analysis. Critical discourse analysis encourages understanding of the context, which can be lost in using computer-aided analysis of qualitative data that tends to isolate content (quotations, etc.) and pull it away from its overall context. Steps in analysis generally included:

- Creation of a theoretical/conceptual framework using the literature review and critical concepts again identified in “Section C: Critical concepts and theories informing them”. Theories used include organizational theories, particularly those focusing on social movement organizations (including resource dependence and political process), identity and mobilization theories (politicized, collective and organizational identity, with a focus on activation and destabilization), and theories on panethnicity and coalition-building,
- Identification of initial codes from theoretical concepts and from analytic memos identifying themes that were kept throughout my time in the field,
- Coding/identifying discursive moments in the transcribed data, honing codes, creating new codes from emerging themes, and organizing codes into ‘Families’ or groups that link back to the theoretical/conceptual framework, and

- Iterative Process: Continued coding until saturation was reached, with enough support to extend and/or contradict existing theoretical frameworks.
- Identification of quotes that highlight the identified themes that underlie study findings.

Following are a few examples of codes, both initially developed and created as analysis progressed and themes emerged. These codes were used to identify discursive moments around various organizational processes and structures, frames, and collective identity activation and destabilization:

- Organizational Process: Decision-making moments
- Organizational Process: Frame One Voice//Frame Our Community
- Organizational Process: Moments of compromise among members
- Organizational Process: Strategies for CHARGE coalition-building
- Organizational Structure: Member Staff role in coalition
- Organizational Structure: Display of informal rules of engagement
- Organizational Structure: Limits of member organizations in the coalition
- CHARGE definition or identity
- CHARGE role//CHARGE as a portal to funding
- CACF definition or identity
- Moments of use of personal identity
- Moments of Tension: Differing perspectives of service and non-service orgs
- Moments of Tension: Member role lack of clarity
- Moments of Tension: Asserting specific ethnic community difference
- Moments of Tension: Imbalance of power/power dynamics

- Moments of Tension: Sarcasm and joking about identity

In Chapter Four, I take a step back to provide additional context for this study. I highlight histories of the Asian American community in New York City and of organizing and organizations in New York City's Asian American community. This context is provides valuable information for a thorough analysis of Project CHARGE, a coalition that emerged from within the Asian American community in New York City, and its structures and processes. In Chapters Five and Six, after having described contextual factors, I share the findings of this study on collective identity and organizational coalition-building.

CHAPTER 4: HISTORY AND CONTEXT - ASIAN AMERICAN COMMUNITY AND ORGANIZING

The Asian American movement is and has historically been at its core a pan-ethnic identity-based movement that encompasses a very diverse community. This identity-based movement includes multiple religions, national origins, languages, immigration experiences and generations, education levels, socioeconomic status, and racial phenotypes among other factors (Lien, 2001; Zia, 2000). In the Asian American community, much coalition- and movement-building has been achieved by engaging ethnic community organizations in pan-ethnic coalitions (organizational collaborations), with ethnic-specific organizations mobilizing their respective constituencies (Okamoto, 2010 & 2006; Junn and Masuoka, 2008; Lien et al, 2004; Geron et al, 2001; Epiritu, 1993).

In this chapter, I provide some background and context of the Asian American community in the U.S. and the local New York City context, including the current landscape and recent history of Asian American organizations and organizing in New York City. Contextual factors are important to understand the impacts of larger and macro-level forces on organizational coalition-building. First, in using a discursive perspective, it is clear that larger context and societal or grand discourse often influences, creates and limits localized or specific discourse. A critical discourse analysis requires understanding of context in order to better understand the push and pull between levels of discourse.

Contextual factors are especially important in utilizing a guiding framework suggested by Diane Vaughan (2010) in her study of organizational failure – a framework I use especially as I focus on moments of tension and destabilization of collective identities in pan-ethnic coalition-building. In understanding organizational (in this case coalitional) processes and

structures, Vaughan highlights the importance of understanding the competitive environment within an organizational field as well as the regulatory environmental factors within which an organization operates.

Additionally, Okamoto (2003, 2006) in her work on pan-ethnic action and commitment focuses on the importance of environmental and societal factors that result in heightened boundaries between Asian and non-Asian groups, including experiences of segregation, prejudice, discrimination, and violence towards Asian Americans. Therefore, an understanding of the various social, political and other contextual factors that might play a role in the deployment, activation, or destabilization of collective identities is critical to this study. This is true in understanding not only Project CHARGE as a coalition entity, but also in understanding more thoroughly the lead organization, the Coalition for Asian American Children and Families, as well as the many organizational members of Project CHARGE.

A. Asian Americans and the Politicized Pan-ethnic Identity in the United States

*...Oh California's coming down,
As you can plainly see.
They are hiring all the Chinamen
And discharging you and me;
But strife will be in every town
Throughout the Pacific Shore,
And the cry of old and young shall be,
"O damn, 'Twelve Hundred More'"*
Popular American song in the 1870's
(Takaki, 1990)

People from Asian countries trace their roots in the U.S. back to the 1700s, starting mostly with Filipino and Chinese migrants. As numbers of Chinese immigrants grew, so did racist and exclusionary policies towards Asian immigrants. From the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 and Asian Exclusion Acts of 1924, to policies that led to the mandatory internment of over

100,000 Japanese Americans during the 1940s, and to the creation of present-day policies, such as immigration and welfare reform, that exclude the voices of the Asian American community or leadership in their construction, Asian Americans continue to be racialized, homogenized, and marginalized in mainstream U.S. society and decision-making that impacts real lives (Gundanna et al.; 2011, Low, 2008).

Although the pan-ethnic terminology Asian was in use for decades, beginning 1977 the U.S. Office of Management and Budget issued an official directive ordering federal agencies to capture information using the racial classification of Asian or Pacific Islander (Wu, 2003). This mandate formalized a socially and politically constructed identity. The Asian American category or identity is now used by institutions and the larger U.S. society to represent a very diverse group of people in terms of ethnicity, race, culture, language and English proficiency, immigration experience and status, generation, gender and sexuality, socio-economic status, and education level, among other dimensions. According to the latest U.S. Census Bureau data, currently Asian Americans are the fastest-growing populations in the United States, growing by an average of 46 percent, between 2000 and 2010, as compared to the nationwide average growth of 10 percent during the same time period.

The Asian American identity is comprised of multiple social identities that span across these various dimensions (Chen, 2005). Throughout its history, the Asian American identity has been politicized. Until the mid-1960s, Asian was mainly a term placed on the population by mainstream and white Americans in creating exclusionary policies towards Asians in America (i.e. Asian Exclusion Act and exclusionary immigration, citizenship, and land ownership policies). Asian ethnic specific

organizations (Korean, Chinese, etc.) began to arise starting in the mid-1800s and provided a community-based structure within which to provide supportive services and address collective concerns of people, including equal rights and fair employment practices (Chan, 1991; Espiritu, 1993; Okamoto 2006).

In the 1960s Civil Rights era, the Asian American identity began to be reclaimed and gain support as it started to be used by student groups on college campuses and the larger communities themselves. Asians of multiple ethnicities began to come together in efforts of collective action and to form Asian pan-ethnic social movement organizations that provided a forum through which the community could voice concerns, advocate for equal rights and appropriate government resources, and provide necessary services that were not accessible or available to the community (Rim, 2009; Low, 2008; Vo, 2004; Le Espiritu, 1993; Zia, 2001).

Ethnic identity is itself political and politicized by nature (Nagel, 1994), as it is now associated with the distribution of resources and power in the U.S., and with political and cultural opportunities. The Census and other data collection tools depend on various forms of identity-related data. Asian American panethnicity as an aggregated category or collective identity is itself a political identity with the potential to influence mobilization behaviors of individuals, communities, and organizations (Okamoto, 2003, 2006, 2010; Wong et al., 2005).

To this day, Asian American community-based and social movement organizations play an active and critical role in constructing and reconstructing the Asian American pan-ethnic identity, which represents an ever-diversifying and fast-growing pan-ethnic community. Often, due simply to the fact that working across heavily immigrant Asian ethnic communities poses language and cultural barriers, pan-ethnic Asian American social movement organizations work

through collaborations and coalitions with local individual ethnic community organizations in order to reach out to the larger community.

It is important to note that panethnicity is by no means a phenomenon limited to the Asian American community, although the Asian American community does pose somewhat distinct challenges in terms of encompassing diversity across nationality, race, religion, immigration/migration experiences, language, and other aspects of culture. Research on panethnicity has also focused on the Latino and Native American communities (Saavedra, 2012; Itzigsohn, 2000; Jones-Correa, 1996; Nagel, 1995). The importance of studying panethnicity is therefore clear in that pan-ethnic groupings have been and are continually used in describing and representing diverse and growing communities in the U.S. in social, political, and economic contexts. Further, panethnicity also continues to be used by communities of color and immigrant communities themselves, in order to build political power, mobilize communities, and fight for resources.

B. The Asian American Community in New York City

Asian Americans are the fastest growing racial/ethnic group in both the U.S. and in New York City and currently comprise over 15% of New York City². This equates to more Asian Americans residing in New York City than in the cities of San Francisco and Los Angeles combined. Nationally, the Asian American population is projected to grow by 143% in the next 40 years (Colby et al, 2015).

² American Community Survey, U.S. Census Bureau, 2011-2015 5-year estimates and American Community Survey, U.S. Census Bureau, 2016 1-year estimates

Asian Americans in New York City are heavily immigrant with over 70% who are foreign-born³. The Asian American community is continually battling the myth of the model minority (Espiritu, 1993) and the stereotype of the perpetual foreigner or conditional citizen (Kim 2008; Low, 2008). Contrary to these stereotypes, Asian American communities face real struggles and challenges, especially in New York City. Almost a quarter of Asian Americans live in poverty in NYC, with the HIGHEST poverty rate among full-time, year-round workers, of all racial/ethnic groups (NYC Center for Economic Opportunity, 2017). Almost 15% of Asian Americans (AA) ages 18 and over remain uninsured in New York City; a majority (89%) of those uninsured in NYC are foreign-born. Over 38% of Asian Americans in NYC receive Medicaid – this is the highest rate of Medicaid usage within any racial/ethnic group in NYC⁴.

Asian American communities face immigration status-related challenges, language barriers, and consistently show low utilization of services and supports available to them, from medical and mental health services to financial and housing supports. Additionally, Asian American households have the highest rate of linguistic isolation in New York City, at 42.5%, defined as a household where no one over the age of 5 speaks English very well (Asian Americans for Equality, 2011).

Utilizing Okamoto's (2003, 2006) theory of panethnicity, there have been plenty of opportunities for heightening or brightening boundaries between Asian American and non-Asian communities in the forms of segregation, marginalization, and social exclusion. This

³ American Community Survey, U.S. Census Bureau, 2011-2015 5-year estimates

⁴ NYC Community Health Survey 2015, NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene

contributes to a potentially strong inclination for pan-ethnic collective action on both an individual and organizational level.

C. New York City's Asian American Organizations and the Landscape of Asian American Organizing and Social Movements

There are currently a number of pan-Asian organizations that operate in New York City, many who in one form or another advocate for the Asian American communities of New York City. These organizations include, but are not limited to, the Coalition for Asian American Children and Families (www.cacf.org), the Asian American Federation (www.aafny.org), the Committee Against Anti-Asian Violence (www.CAAAV.org), the Asian Pacific Islander Coalition on HIV/AIDS (www.apicha.org), and Asian Americans for Equality (www.aafe.org). Many of these organizations began in the 80s, and one in the 70s. Some of these organizations provide direct services to Asian American families, as well as engaging in larger social change and systems change efforts, and some are strictly macro policy/systems change-focused.

Organizational involvement in collective action or participation in social movements towards some type of social change is moderated by social and political limitations and opportunities. In his review of literature, Tarrow (1996) identifies political opportunities as the dimensions within a particular political struggle that enable people or entities to act or engage in collective action as part of the struggle or contention.

According to advocates and activists in the Asian American community, since 2008 and possibly corresponding with the economic downturn that significantly impacted immigrant communities, along with the advent of the Obama era, there has been a resurgence of opportunities for Asian American collective voice in New York City. This has been witnessed by

an influx of young Asian American leaders with a growing political voice in both governmental and nonprofit fields. Additionally, November 2008 marked the launch of the (then) 11% and Growing Coalition (now 15% and Growing Coalition), which according to its Facebook page is:

...the first-ever comprehensive coalition of Asian Pacific American service organizations in New York City to advocate for fair State and City budget. Due to the economic downturn, over 45 Asian led and serving organizations came together to respond to proposed budget cuts in education, health, and human services. To ensure our needs are adequately met, Asian Pacific American communities must receive a fair share of public funding.⁵

A closer understanding of the context of resources and competition as well as regulatory environments (Vaughan, 2010) is a way to assess political opportunities and explain the abilities of organizations to successfully participate in collective actions and in social movements.

Resources and Competition

Asian American organizations – both ethnic specific and pan-ethnic – struggle to meet the multiple needs within the community due to a lack of access to resources. According to CACF's 15% and Growing Coalition, although Asian Americans currently comprise over 15% of New York City's total population and face multiple hardships, Asian-led and -serving community based organizations receive less than 1% of the City's social services contract dollars, less than 1% of the City's foundation grant dollars, and less than 5% of the City Council's discretionary dollars. This share of dollars, albeit small, represents an increase since the 90s when Asian

⁵ Available at: https://www.facebook.com/pg/15PercentandGrowing/about/?ref=page_internal

community based organizations were almost completely ignored by funders. CACF staff state that this, “means that some communities don’t have the capacity to provide the resources and services they need for the community. Additionally, because of the slightly skewed RFP process, larger organizations are always able to secure bigger pots of the money.”

The fight for resources and legitimacy among Asian American organizations is made even more difficult because of the model minority myth that leads to the harmful denial of the multiple Asian American community needs and challenges, as well as the myth of Asians as perpetual foreigners who aren’t from the U.S. and therefore shouldn’t benefit from the social support systems created for “Americans”. Further, as CACF staff describe, “within the larger health and poverty disparities dialogue, Asian Americans are not placed anywhere in the spectrum. We have to clamor sometimes to make known that the needs of the community are quite relevant.”

Regulatory Environments

Another factor that is important to highlight in terms of Asian American organizations and organizing in New York City is the shift in the nature of Asian American organizations from more radical and social-change oriented organizations to less radical direct human and social service-providing organizations. As direct service organizations are mostly government-funded and overseen, this shift introduces a different regulatory environment.

As Nicole Marwell (2008) explains, community-based organizations (CBOs) aim to “harness material resources and regulatory powers of government in order to shift field-level outcomes in ways that benefit poor people” (p. 10). The communities that these organizations

represent and from which they grow are most often poor, and socially and politically excluded. A major goal of the community organization is therefore to strengthen their disenfranchised communities by enhancing their social integration. The struggle begins when a community organization tries to gain the necessary resources from mainstream suppliers (i.e. government funders and foundations) in order to grow while still effectively achieving the community-level mission. And further, when a community organization accepts mainstream funds, it becomes a struggle to advocate to change the very systems that are providing those necessary resources to serve the community.

In his historical analysis, Liu (2008) discusses the construction of the Asian American movement during the Civil Right era in the 1960s and 70s as utilizing radical ideological frames. He notes how an increased professionalization and service-providing orientation of Asian American organizations since that time has resulted in less activist and less contentious frames, and a more institutional as well as consensual or compliant nature. He notes that the shift to service-provision has thereby reduced the overall power of Asian American social movements for social change.

More specifically, the increase in service provision among Asian American organizations in the 80s and 90s and the expansion in service delivery funded by mainstream suppliers (government and foundations) resulted in creating an overall regulatory environment that suppressed social movements and organizing for social change. Additionally, Piven and Cloward (1977) also argued in their seminal work that in the interest of maintaining and growing government funding, service organizations pivot towards less contentious social movement goals and objectives. The present-day ability of individual Asian American nonprofit

organizations, especially those providing direct services as a primary focus, to engage in more social and systemic change efforts is very limited.

Despite these shifts, in his study of a pan-Asian coalition, Chin (2014) found that a health access-focused coalition comprised mostly of service providing agencies did not use contentious or radical tactics, or focus on goals involving fundamental systemic changes. Still, he found that this coalition was effective in engaging in advocacy to improve community health access under the existing health care legislation. This article speaks to the value in coalition-building as a method of building and maintaining some power among Asian American direct service organizations, who individually might be limited in their abilities as such, to fight for issues around social justice and impact larger systemic change. And it supports the earlier point made by multiple historians about Asian American pan-ethnic organizing as a primary modality of the community's participation in social movements.

D. Challenges of Pan-Asian Collective Action

In my experiences, working in and studying the pan-Asian community in New York City, I have seen the challenges in representing the diversity encompassed within the pan-ethnic identity. Advocates who work in the community continue to discuss whether the Asian American collective identity remains useful or whether it is too broad and non-representative. Many advocates in Asian ethnic specific communities speak of the disparities within the community and being forgotten or washed-out once lumped under the larger Asian American collective identity. This challenge specifically comes up in the context of data collected on the Asian American community for the purposes of

deciding on public resources⁶. There is definite disparity within the Asian American community. Many smaller Asian immigrant groups that face higher levels of poverty and marginalization in New York City, such as Vietnamese, Cambodian, and Bangladeshi populations, call for disaggregated data that doesn't lump them in together with larger and generally more affluent Asian ethnic groups in New York City, such as Indian Americans.

In his case study of a direct service pan-Asian organization, Otis (2001) found that the organization, in its various organizational processes affecting staff and clients, ended up reinforcing societal inequalities and replicating dominant (and oppressive) ideologies involving gender-norms ethnic favoritism, and other discriminatory patterns due to external political and social influences. In line with Otis' findings, it is quite common to see in New York City "Asian American" organizations in namesake, which essentially are mostly led by and serving Chinese (and/or Korean at times) communities. This East Asian or more specifically Chinese-dominance serves only to reproduce existing stereotypes of what and who mainstream society believes is pan-Asian.

An additional challenge in pan-Asian collective action is a divide that exists within the Asian American community between people who believe in collecting information/data that allows for individual Asian ethnic groups to be identified (disaggregated data) and those who want to keep Asian American community data as one pan-ethnic category. Those who would like to collect disaggregated data believe that is the best way to understand disparities and

⁶ <http://www.nbcnews.com/news/asian-america/data-shows-duality-asian-america-high-income-high-poverty-n190031>

needs within the community, and allocate resources and develop services to target true community needs. Those who don't believe in disaggregation claim that it is in an effort to unify the Asian American community, but refuse to see how many Asian ethnic communities continue to struggle with exclusion and misunderstanding, and the perpetuation of stereotypes and ethnic favoritism⁷. Studies and community experience clearly highlight the difficulties of truly representative and engaging across the pan-Asian collective identity and the challenges in building a pan-Asian coalition.

The question that remains is whether and how the pan-ethnic Asian American identity itself remains relevant and used in coalition-building across diverse organizations. The study of pan-ethnic Asian American non-profit coalitions and alliances, and particularly those promoting social justice and social movements, is very limited. Asian American pan-ethnic coalition building has been studied on a macro/national level but requires more study locally, especially in terms of organizational processes and how ethnic/pan-ethnic boundaries are created and experienced at the organizational level.

As stated previously, this study focuses on the role and impact of identity – specifically collective ethnic and organizational identity, in various organizational processes and structural dynamics of a coalition and in coalition-building. In Chapter Five, I provide a detailed description and share my findings about the nature of the Project CHARGE, the main focus of this study, and the Coalition for Asian American Children and Families (CACF), the nonprofit organization which convenes and leads Project CHARGE. Following these descriptive findings,

⁷ <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/asian-america/california-data-disaggregation-bill-sparks-debate-asian-american-community-n638286>

Chapter Six turns to the findings of this study around collective identity and organizational coalition-building with a specific focus on the concept of identity work as applied in this study.

CHAPTER 5: DESCRIPTIONS OF PROJECT CHARGE AND THE COALITION FOR ASIAN AMERICAN CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

In this chapter, I use collected and analyzed data from interviews and document reviews to construct a thick description of the organizational coalition, Project CHARGE, and of the larger or umbrella nonprofit organization that convenes and leads the coalition, the Coalition for Asian American Children and Families (CACF). I include contextual factors in my description of the evolution of Project CHARGE as well as the various structures and processes of the coalition. I begin by describing CACF and then move to a description of Project CHARGE.

A. The Coalition for Asian American Children and Families: A Pan-Asian Organization

The Coalition for Asian American Children and Families (CACF) is an organizational member-based pan-Asian children and family's policy advocacy organization, dedicated to improving the health and well-being of Asian Pacific American (APA)⁸ children, youth, and families through advocating for improved policies, funding, and services. According to CACF's website, the mission of the organization is as follows⁹:

As the nation's only pan-Asian children's advocacy organization, we believe that children of all backgrounds should have the support they need to thrive. We improve the health and well-being of Asian Pacific American children, youth, and families in New York City by:

- Providing programs and policy campaigns that challenge stereotypes of the "Asian model minority"

⁸ CACF uses the term Asian Pacific American (APA) to describe the panethnic population represented by the organization. This term is inclusive of Pacific Islander Americans.

⁹ <http://cacf.org/home/who-we-are/mission/> (Accessed January 2017)

- Speaking out on behalf of families in-need, especially immigrants struggling with poverty and limited English skills
- Advocating for better policies, funding, and access to services at the city and state level.

According to staff, CACF traditionally focused on the issues around child welfare, education, and health access and equity, but their work remains open to tackling various community needs. One staff broke the work of CACF up into three main categories: capacity-building through funding and providing trainings; policy-related research and advocacy on behalf of the APA community; and leadership development through equipping youth and parents to identify and advocate for their needs.

CACF was founded in 1986 by a number of direct serving organizations that saw their own limitations in effecting systems change, and the value in building a pan-Asian coalition-based movement towards fighting for improved policies and systems to serve New York City's Asian American communities. According to CACF's 25th Anniversary materials, CACF:

- In 1988 published a Directory of Asian American Social Service Organizations
- In 1992 incorporated as a 501c3 non-profit organization in NY State
- In 1995 hired its first executive director
- In 1997 began to coalition-build through convening Cultural Diversity Roundtables and launched an organizing program to empower parents
- In 1999 began publishing reports and policy papers on the needs of Asian American families, and hosted a conference entitled, "Speaking Out: Addressing the Unmet Needs of Asian American Children"

- In 2000 began publishing parent education brochures around child welfare and education.
- In 2003 launched the first cohort of the Asian American Student Advocacy Project – an initiative to train APA NYC high school students about advocacy and how to impact policy change.
- In 2008, collaboratively established Project CHARGE (Coalition for Health Access to Reach Greater Equity), a health advocacy collaborative of 16 organizations to address health equity and access issues in Asian Pacific American communities.
- In 2013, CACF's efforts to raise the visibility for contract reform in the NYS Department of Health led to 17 APA organizations (14 of which are CHARGE members) receiving a 5-year multi-million dollar contract from the New York State to serve as in-person assistors/navigators for health insurance.
- In 2014, in collaboration with the Hispanic Federation (HF) and New York Urban League (NYUL) formed an alliance to provide capacity-building support to Black, Latino, and Asian-led community-based organizations (CBOs) throughout New York City's five boroughs. With an allocation from the New York City Council of \$2.5 million, the three organizations along with the Asian American Federation and Black Agency Executives, developed the Communities of Color Nonprofit Stabilization Fund (CCNSF).
- In 2014, CACF in collaboration with other immigrant- and health-focused organizations gained New York City Council funding for Access Health, an initiative to fill the gaps on healthcare access by effectively and comprehensively outreaching to and educating immigrants and other vulnerable communities on health care.

By 2014, according to annual report data, CACF had grown to a 13-member staff, a 15-member Board of Directors, a young professional fundraising network, and over 40 volunteers. The organizational budget was over \$1.9 million, over half of which was dedicated to sub-grants to support health access outreach and capacity building projects in Asian-led community-based organizations.

Importance of Pan-Asian Coalition-building

CACF staff noted clearly the importance, for them, of building a pan-Asian coalition. CACF staff notes, “For the past 30 years, we [CACF] have been filling a void to get attention to the APA community. To *give a voice* to the APA community.” One CACF staff discusses the importance of pan-Asian work in terms of creating a larger or more numerous movement to advocate for equity:

I think it’s a necessity to do this work, pan-ethnically. That’s what I’ve realized through my time here at CACF. It’s really hard to push an agenda if it’s only ethnic-based or from an individual organization. The only time that works is when there is a specific crisis – for example addressing the Nepali earthquake – it was so specific and you have to wear that hat. But it is really difficult to push any larger equity issues without pan-Asian organizing and coming together.

Another CACF staff talks about the reasoning for pan-Asian work in terms of pushing for increased funding to the community, regardless of organization size:

The great equalizer is funding, right? That’s why [CACF] does budget advocacy. It’s APA across the board - no distinctions across groups. So, this way smaller organization so they can join us for advocacy and they can meet with their council members, too.

[Large organizations] don't really need us, but they join us and are a member of ours because we increase funding for them, too. We're trying to help everybody. There's Chinese, South Asian, Korean groups. We have everybody under our umbrella. When we do our advocacy, when we do any of our programming work, it's with everybody in mind. When I'm checking off boxes, I want to make sure we are taking care of all communities – I mean we can't take care of every community – but to be more representative and inclusive is our goal.

CACF: Growth With a Transition from Advocacy to Service

Much of the sustained growth of CACF in the past 5 years has been due to obtaining government grants/contracts – both NY City and NY State contracts. These contracts all serve as pass-through funding with a portion for administration remaining at CACF and the large majority redistributed as sub-grants for service and organizational growth to mostly Asian American social service community-based organizations. Three main government contracts that act as pass-through funding for APA CBOs include one (1) that is focused on organizational capacity-building for community-based organizations serving predominantly communities of color, and two (2) that are focused on health insurance access assistance and outreach to New York City's APA community. Therefore, according to staff and available financial documents, the actual organizational operating budget has stayed well under \$1Mill although their overall budget hovers near \$2Mill.

According to a staff-member describing the organizations work in the arena of healthcare access and insurance, CACF started out advocating around health equity in APA

communities, but began uncovering service gaps and slowly transitioned into being involved in service implementation. The staff states that CACF:

...at first advocated to be included into the policy – the Affordable Care Act. Now, we get funding to be enrollment assistants or Navigators. So, the role became looking at it as policy advocacy, to actually helping to implement direct services that would help people benefit from this law. So, we got a State contract. And I started to do more programmatic stuff like providing training for the (healthcare) navigators to keep up-to-date on the news laws and policies.

CACF staff also describe how the organization, again realizing gaps in health-related outreach, began to search for funding that might support that within the APA community. In its outreach work, CACF partnered with other groups including immigrant, LGBT, disability rights, etc. to find funding for increased outreach and education to the community on health insurance and access. The staff states CACF, “started to get more involved... to get outreach and education money to community-based organizations to do this type of work.”

All CACF staff interviewed spoke about the organizational focus on pushing for more and bigger pots of funding to redistribute to the APA community. Staff discuss the inability of bigger and mainstream organizations to understand and appropriately reach and serve Asian American communities given the complexities of language, culture, ethnicity, and immigration status, thereby requiring the need to find and distribute funds to Asian American community-based organizations to do the work.

The increasing role of government grants has defined CACF over recent years as a portal to get funding funneled to APA community organizations. CACF staff also notes that the

government contracts have been helpful in sustaining CACF operations, and position and clout in the community. As a recipient of government contracts, the organization also faces specific regulatory constraints and becomes limited in its ability to criticize or push for change of the same entities that provide or administer funding and help to sustain the organization. Similarly, staff identify the pressure for CACF to continue serving as a portal for funding to be funneled to APA organizations. As mentioned in the previous section, regulatory environments and resource competition have contributed to shaping the nature of building movements for equity and social change away from a radical nature and towards a more service-oriented and compliant nature. CACF's organizational shift from a policy advocacy focus to a service-dominated orientation is not explored in detail through this study, but it is clear from data that such a shift took place at CACF through the time of this study and as the organization managed multiple government contracts.

Roles of CACF for Project CHARGE as Seen by CACF Staff: Convener, Synthesizer, Unifier, and Advocate

Over the past ten years, CACF has focused on growing its active dues-paying organizational membership – currently numbering around 45 Asian-led and -serving organizations across New York City, according to the CACF website¹⁰. This includes a number of organizations that serve multiple populations, including Asian Americans, and that want to be involved in advocating for equity for Asian and immigrant communities. Smaller member organizations include those that organize smaller and more marginalized Asian ethnic groups in New York City (such as Southeast Asians, Nepalese, Filipino). Larger organizations include

¹⁰ <http://cacf.org/home/who-we-are/member-organizations/> (accessed January 2017)

settlement houses, hospitals and large religiously-based NYC nonprofits. Organizational members have budgets that span from under \$ 500,000 to multiple millions of dollars. Please see Appendix E, “CACF Member Organization Characteristics”.

CACF staff, in meetings and during interviews, has described their advocacy style as “grass-tops advocacy,” engaging their organizational members and community leaders that represent and serve respective communities across New York City, as opposed to traditional grassroots organizing of individuals. Internet search reveals that this concept of grass-tops advocacy is relatively recent but has now been in use for a number of years. It seems to describe an inside-ball tactic of advocacy – seeking out influential people and connected leaders to push an agenda¹¹. CACF uses this term slightly differently - to describe their work with mobilizing community organizations and community leaders as representatives of popular or community support. As stated by a CACF staff, the organization succeeds in, “really embracing the diversity that we have and using that as a way to move our policy priorities. Power and Identity can move a lot of the policy-priorities.”

All CACF staff persons remark about the centrality of CACF’s membership organizations that drive the work of the coalition organization. In fact, one staffer states that member organizations report CACF is, “the only group that invites us to be a part of the decision-maker and policy meetings. Like in other groups they just tell us that they met with the decision makers and relay information. But [CACF is] the only ones that include at those meetings.”

¹¹ <https://www.politico.com/story/2007/06/in-lobbying-communication-goes-both-ways-004703> (Accessed November 2017)

According to a CACF staffer, CACF fulfills a much-needed role as *convener* of APA organizations and *synthesizer* of community needs. This is especially because, as stated by the staff person, “some organizations, particularly the small organizations, don’t have the capacity to have advocates or do advocacy lobbying work, so we work with the community to synthesize what APA community needs are and lobby for them on both the City and State level.”

According to CACF staff, CACF also plays the role as unifier across diverse APA organizations across the City: “That’s the thing. Honestly, all these groups trust CACF to take the lead. They don’t necessarily trust each other... we have to be very intentional to unify everyone... [I]n the beginning of anything it could be like – rifts. Our goal is to really bring these guys together.”

Roles of CACF As Seen by Project CHARGE Member Organizations: Trusted Policy Advocate, Funder, Coalition-builder

This study was limited to research with CACF member organizations that are or were a part of the health equity coalition Project CHARGE, coordinated by CACF. Due to the focus of Project CHARGE on health equity and access, and the unique organizational experiences given resource, service, and policy environments around health and healthcare, organizational responses to questions about CACF that are documented here may be different than other members’ experiences of CACF.

Many organizations reported a strong level of trust with CACF as an organization. CACF was described as having “community-mindedness rather than self-interest,” “great coordination and leadership,” and “sound bookkeeping practices”. Organizations describe an overall desire to work with CACF. They describe CACF as a chosen leader by many community organizations for the different coalitions and campaigns that exist under the CACF umbrella and

areas of programming that involve member organizations. One organization representative did discuss a level of distrust with CACF leadership, but trust in CACF staff and infrastructure, as well as trust in member organizations' ability to collectively direct the work of various CACF projects and coalitions that they are part of.

All but one organization interviewed highlighted the role of *CACF as a policy advocate*, and especially that their organizations value this role since they do not have the capacity and/or are not allowed to conduct advocacy themselves, given the nature of their service. Members also value CACF's information-sharing when it comes to policies and access to decision-makers. A member organization staff states, "[CACF is] a really great organization with policy advocacy. There are not many organization that advocate for AA children and family – I appreciate that they are there. Without them, it would be really hard to get to some meetings or get information. I know they do a lot of work in terms of advocacy/policy work." Another member organization staff states that CACF makes "sure we are informed about what bills are there that we should support. They are really the go-to for policy advocacy for AA." Staff of member organizations discuss how CACF conducts research and builds relationships with elected officials and decision-makers and invites member organizations to meet with decision-makers.

Every organization interviewed spoke of CACF as a partner and coalition-builder, bringing organizations together and coordinating initiatives. One organizational member states, "I think we as an organization see CACF as a really important partner. Their name always comes up as someone we need to partner with on projects because they are a leader and they are experts in bringing all these different groups together." Another remarks, "CACF

plays a big role in bringing Asian Pacific organizations together around issues that have been prevailing for a long time.”

Finally, five organizations interviewed identified CACF’s strong role as a funder and grant-maker. In fact, one of those organizations found funding of healthcare navigators as CACF’s most vital role, stating, “What’s so good about CACF is that they are very fair and they split the money between the agencies. They are strong, very smart, good heads on their shoulders and experience. They have time to do it. They working very hard for it and they do it.” Another member-organization staff interviewed states that CACF, “doesn’t do direct service – the good thing is that they are a large organization and get the grant and distribute to smaller CBO organizations.”

Although there are unique aspects of how CACF does its work, the general strategy of organizational coalition-building employed by CACF continues to be used by many organizations in mobilizing pan-ethnic, minority and immigrant collective identity community organizations including those focusing on Hispanic, Native American, Asian American, African American, etc. Examples of other such diverse and pan-ethnic or pan-immigrant organizational coalitions both locally and nationally include, but aren’t limited to: NY Immigration Coalition, Hispanic Federation, Asian American Federation, National Hispanic Education Coalition, and National Coalition for Asian Pacific American Community Development, Asian Pacific Islander American Health Forum, National Coalition of Asian Pacific American Community Development, etc. Pan-ethnic organizations like CACF traditionally represent a large and growing swath of minority and immigrant communities in the U.S. Studies focused on pan-ethnic coalition organizations can not only be applicable and relevant to organizing efforts across diverse minority groups, but can

also be relevant to coalition organizations that focus on collective identity categories that aren't ethnic, such as the LGBTQ or women's rights coalitions. In fact, some of the seminal work and theory that this study is based on is taken from organizational studies in the LGBTQ community.

B. Project CHARGE (Coalition for Health Access to Reach Greater Equity)

Background

Project CHARGE (Coalition for Health Access to Reach Greater Equity, referred to herein as "the coalition"), a health access collaborative to address health access issues in Asian American communities, was formed in 2008 by a group of nonprofit and other advocates within New York City's Asian American Community. In its beginning years it was supported by a 4-year grant-funded program, Health Through Action, provided by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation and developed in partnership with the Asian & Pacific Islander American Health Forum (APIAHF). According to information from its website Project CHARGE is, "an advocacy collaborative to address health equity and access issues in Asian Pacific American communities," with priorities of, "Advocating for a robust language access plan for health consumer outreach, education, and health insurance enrollment; Ensuring community voices are central in the decision-making process of city and state health agencies; Protecting the safety net and increasing options for the remaining uninsured."¹²

Since the inception of Project CHARGE, the Coalition for Asian American Children & Families (CACF) has been the coalition's convener and coordinator. As stated by a CACF staff person, "It's a symbiotic relationship. We work hand in hand. I don't ever think there was a time when CHARGE was out front on an issue and we've been like, whoa, we have to reel them

¹² <http://cacf.org/home/what-we-do/advocacy-equity/health/project-charge/>

back in.” As stated by a Project CHARGE member who has been involved with the coalition since its inception, “CACF was picked. It wasn’t that [CACF] picked the groups. The groups decided who was going to be part of the group – together. CACF was chosen by the group just like everyone else.” Despite some skepticism, members of Project CHARGE generally felt that CACF was the best to convene and lead the group because CACF is itself a community group, not a large institution like a hospital, that represents and spans across Asian American communities. According to CACF staff, some of the group members had negative experiences in collaborations where the lead organization, often larger non-community-based groups, took all the credit for the work of the group. It was therefore an intentional decision to make sure the group and its members were valued and uplifted. One example of how that was done, as explained by CACF staff, was in ensuring that CACF’s, “Executive Director stepped back... so the group is accountable to itself, not the ED [of CACF]. Then things happened.”

The coalition began in 2008 with 14 organizational members, including CACF, as well as one evaluator. Together, the coalition of organizations represented communities across New York City that speak over 19 Asian languages and represent tens of cultures and multiple religions. Original members as of an informational brochure from February 2010 were¹³:

- Asian Americans for Equality—a community development organization
- Asian & Pacific Islander Coalition on HIV/AIDS—a pan-Asian HIV/ AIDS clinic
- Center for the Study of Asian American Health at New York University—a research center
- Charles B. Wang Community Health Center—a federally qualified health clinic

¹³ http://www.apiahf.org/sites/default/files/HTA_Factsheet02_2010.pdf (February, 2010)

- Child Center of New York—a licensed mental health and substance abuse clinic
- Chinese-American Planning Council—a social service organization
- Coalition for Asian American Children and Families—a pan-Asian children’s advocacy organization
- Family Health Project, Japanese American Association—a public advocacy and prevention education organization
- Henry Street Settlement—a provider of many health, behavioral, and support services
- Kalusugan Coalition—a Filipino health coalition
- Korean Community Services of Metropolitan New York—a social service organization
- MAAWS for Global Welfare—a Bangladeshi community-based organization
- New York Asian Women’s Center—a pan-Asian domestic violence organization
- South Asian Health Initiative—an outreach and education initiative (now part of Memorial Sloan Kettering Immigrant Cancer Disparities Center)
- Project evaluator from Hunter College

According to CACF staff who were a part of Project CHARGE since its inception, the coalition’s organizational members were already connected and working together for two to three years before 2008, through their work as a conference planning working group for the yearly conference convened by the New York University Center for the Study of Asian American Health. As reported by some of the original partners, a leader and long-time advocate in the Asian American community in New York City decided that it was time to try for a grant opportunity (national) that arose through a collaboration of the Asian Pacific Islander American

Health Forum, a national health advocacy group in Northern California, and the W.K. Kellogg Foundation. It was acknowledged that New York City Asian American groups were already getting together around issues of health, but only once a year to plan a conference without an opportunity for consistent and long-term work together.

As one original member states, she thought at the time, “Let’s do a project across the board in the Asian American communities, with different ethnic groups, different agencies, different focuses, and for the first time really work together, long term, in the Asian American community.” A member of Project CHARGE who later transitioned to become staff at CACF remarks about the process taken to form the group, “the [conference] planning organizations were interested in joining in to Project CHARGE as an initiative. We had met every year for the conference, so we all folded into Project CHARGE. It’s all who you know in the community – who you work with. And we add on different groups and people, but it’s all colleagues of so and so, and people you know.” Another staff added, “The larger groups were already at the table, so the small and mid-sized groups felt efficacy to be part of this larger initiative – this larger coalition.” The implications of these statements and those of others interviewed is that there was a level of legitimacy that drew organizations to want to participate in the coalition, coupled with a significant amount of trust, professional partnerships and collegiality amongst many of the initial member organizations that comprised Project CHARGE.

The initial convening of the organizations to discuss the Kellogg grant took the form of a large-group meeting of multiple community organizations. At that meeting, it was disclosed that another New York City Asian American collective, as well as an Eastern seaboard collective

of South Asian American groups were also applying for the same Kellogg funding and only one group of the three would receive the funding for this area of the country.

As reported by original members, Project CHARGE applied to the W. K. Kellogg Foundation as a broad coalition comprised of social services based in New York City providing mental health services; chronic disease outreach, education, and screening; housing advocacy; youth services; and domestic violence services to the Asian American community. In order to be more inclusive of a broad pan-Asian coalition comprised of a diverse set of organizations, the group decided to focus broadly on health equity and access, which focused on an array of social indicators of health, rather than targeting a specific disease or health condition. As reported by those who attended the initial meeting to strategize the application to Kellogg, “Others [who were applying for the same funding] had said of Project CHARGE that the grouping was too big, too broad.” As a member recounted during a strategic planning meeting, “Health Access was designed [by Project CHARGE] in the beginning to really include everybody. Whether service provider or other, ethnic group or other. It was inclusionary. All represented. CHARGE was about inclusivity and representation.”

Project CHARGE was ultimately selected as the East Coast recipient of the Kellogg funding for Health Through Action, thereby formalizing the collective. Through funding, the coalition reimbursed its member organizations with \$4000 each for the project period of four years, while also supporting CACF as the convener. Initial funding was described by a Project CHARGE member as “a tidy sum” for CACF that led to the organization gaining legitimacy, publicity, and power, and, “incentive for [CACF] in a major way, whereas [for Project CHARGE member organizations] the \$4000 was more like, a you know, blow your nose on it.” Generally,

the funding to member organizations was considered symbolic and important in building trust and conveying the value of the coalition members.

According to an early memorandum of understanding created for Project CHARGE, following were the roles outlined for CACF and for Project CHARGE members:

Coalition for Asian American Children and Families

- Oversee the development, implementation, financial management, and evaluation of Project CHARGE
- Prepare and facilitate Project CHARGE meetings, retreats, trainings, and activities
- Communicate regularly with Project CHARGE partners by phone, email, mail, and fax
- Coordinate Project CHARGE partners and guest speakers for health advocacy trainings
- Facilitate the identification and cultivation of relationships with advocacy, research, health, faith-based, professional organizations, media, and small businesses
- Lead the development and implementation of the Health Access Agenda
- Organize advocacy days, legislative visits, policy briefings, media roundtables, rallies, press conferences, social media campaigns, public education workshops and speaking engagements.

- Create, manage, and update listserv and social media platforms (Facebook, twitter)
- Attend and present learnings at conferences and events to speak about Project CHARGE
- Compile reports submitted by partners, coordinate with evaluator, and submit on time to funders
- Give input on an evaluation report which will document the process of capacity improvements and impact of advocacy efforts on health policies.
- Compensate Project CHARGE partners \$2,000 annually based on their participation.

[insert Project CHARGE Member Organization name]

- Attend monthly meetings & annual retreats
- Identify and cultivate relationships with advocacy, research, health, faith-based, and professional organizations, and small businesses to coordinate and promote commitment to health access
- Share learnings with staff and board members and encourage them to attend trainings on advocacy and health access
- Participate in developing and implementing a health access agenda
- Participate in advocacy actions such as advocacy days, legislative visits, policy briefings, media roundtables, rallies, press

conferences, social media campaigns, public education workshops and speaking engagements.

- Assist in policy research, stakeholder listening sessions, and policy brief and fact sheet development
- Represent Project CHARGE at grantee meetings and workshops
- Give input on an evaluation report which will document the process of capacity improvements and impact of advocacy efforts on health policies.

Project CHARGE brought on board at a very early stage an evaluator for the initiative. Additionally, following their receipt of the award, Project CHARGE contracted with a consulting agency to help with capacity building and strategy for the group, and to facilitate annual strategic planning meetings. The main modality for the work of the coalition was 1) monthly meetings (all held in English) open to the full membership held 11 months out of the year (with a break in the summer), and often hosted in different member organization offices, 2) a yearly strategic planning session, and 3) ad hoc meetings and phone calls whenever necessary to discuss or plan around meetings with decision-makers or other grant opportunities. Monthly meetings vary in attendance depending on organizational representative availability.

In 2010, Project CHARGE was named as 1 of 37 stakeholder groups to participate in then-Governor Paterson's Health Care Reform Advisory Committee. Two members served on the Health Benefit Exchange New York Metro Area Regional Advisory Committee. Also, according to Project CHARGE materials/flyers describing the group and documenting its successes, "in 2013, 17 Asian American serving organizations (14 of which are Project CHARGE

partners) in New York City received 5-year contracts to serve as in-person assistor/navigators for the New York State of Health Marketplace, providing assistance to individuals and families to sign up for health insurance options... Later that year, the collaborative was successful in advocating for the expansion of translated marketplace materials from 6 to 17 languages (9 of which are Asian languages).” Health equity and healthcare access for the Asian American community in New York City continues to be an overarching mission of Project CHARGE.

Project CHARGE: Political and Resource Opportunities and Shifts in the coalition

Project CHARGE membership and focus has shifted slightly throughout the years, with organizations joining and leaving the coalition. Additionally, organizational staff representatives have also shifted even when organizations themselves remain Project CHARGE members. The passage of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) impacted Project CHARGE. As described during a strategic planning session, for Project CHARGE “healthcare access became somewhat defined with Obama’s focus on healthcare reform and insurance coverage... healthcare access became access to insurance companies.” The ACA changed the playing field for many organizations focused on health and healthcare, especially in states like New York that chose to expand Medicaid and opt in to create robust health insurance “marketplaces” where individuals, families, and small businesses could sign up for various private insurance plans offered through the ACA.

One notable shift in the nature of the group has been moving from a focus on policy and systems-change goals towards a focus on social services and funding for services. Using Diane Vaughan’s framework (2010) of analyzing organizational failure, the resource and regulatory environments are paramount to consider in assessing any process or movement of an

organization. As applied to this case, one may not consider this an analysis of an organizational failure, rather a turning away from an organization's initial core mission or work. In fact, one member poses a question, "Maybe what CHARGE addresses is just not that important?" in response to an inquiry around the coalition's lack of an agenda and the lack of tension among member organizations.

A specific set of events and forces that the shifts in Project CHARGE can be attributed to and that was mentioned as significant for Project CHARGE by all those interviewed happened in 2012-2013 when CACF applied for and received a large 5-year New York State Department of Health grant to coordinate and provide funds to multiple Asian American organizations for the provision of health insurance navigation services to targeted communities across New York City. According to those interviewed, this service grant was considered an opportunity for the APA community organizations to develop health insurance education and access services for the communities they serve, with CACF taking the role as lead administrator.

The process of gaining this New York State grant is significant in understanding the shifts as well as the current composition and direction of Project CHARGE. CACF staff explain that the main reason the organization considered applying for the navigator service-oriented grant in 2012 was that multiple member organizations (both those involved in Project CHARGE and not) approached CACF asking them to be the lead organization for what was considered an opportunity to fund direct services to the Asian American community. CACF convened a meeting of Project CHARGE to discuss applying as an Asian American collective to New York State for a healthcare navigator grant. This meeting is described by Project CHARGE members as a rare "tense" and "awkward" coalition meeting. As described, those in attendance were

asked to raise their hands if interested in joining CACF's collective. At that time, some meeting attendees weren't able to commit their organization, and some also disclosed that they were joining navigator collectives with different organizational leads for this grant opportunity. At the end, many organizations expressed their interest in partnering with CACF on the grant.

Most members described the tension in that meeting as passing and "in-the-moment," as well as understandable given the nature of the discussion. Some organizational representatives in the room at the time weren't in a position to commit their organizations. People describe that the meeting was handled well by the CACF staff facilitating the conversation. Member organizations interviewed remember feeling comfortable by the end of the meeting and that their membership with Project CHARGE would not be affected, regardless of their interest in this grant with CACF. The funding was generally seen as a positive and further legitimizing move for CACF as well as the collective.

Almost all of the member organization staff interviewed, as well as CACF staff interviewed view the State grant as a success attributable in large part to Project CHARGE and the collective work and power of the member organizations. In fact, the Navigator grant was consistently referred to by those interviewed as the largest success of Project CHARGE since its inception. Once CACF received the grant, and when the Navigator grant began, it was openly discussed and decided by members that Project CHARGE as a coalition would remain separate from the service-oriented "Healthcare Navigator" program. Not all organizational representatives in Project CHARGE were Navigator-granted organizations and some organizational member representatives in Project CHARGE were Navigators with organizations other than CACF.

Despite its intended separation from Project CHARGE, coalition members noted the direct service-orientation of the discussions during monthly Project CHARGE meetings, as member organizations began to send health Navigators to represent organizations in those meetings. Navigators participating in Project CHARGE relayed community challenges and needs related to healthcare access, with their focus on health insurance coverage under the Affordable Care Act (ACA). According to one CACF staff, since around the time of the Navigator grant: “

[Project] CHARGE doesn't have, outside of the monthly meetings and updates, we don't necessarily have goals or deliverables we have to produce. For the most part... it's been pretty much either regular monthly meetings to get feedback on what's happening at the State, local and fed level, or to hear what partners have been experiencing as far as their health access work.”

A member notes that they doubt some organizations would attend at all if it weren't for being Navigator-funded, “For some agencies... I think it's because they are part of the Navigator funding they got through Project CHARGE, so they feel obligated. But I'm not sure they would keep coming if there was no funding.”

All of the member organizations that provide some level of direct services responded to the question of their role in Project CHARGE as representing their ethnic communities' and organizations struggles and challenges to the larger group. One member highlights the power of direct service provision in representing communities in a Project CHARGE meeting, and notes that the coalition “adapts and changes focus” as necessary and as the service providers say is

needed. Another member describes their role as “middle person” in bringing to the larger advocacy coalition information about the communities they serve.

When asked about their role and value to the group, one non-Navigator (non-direct service staff) member (although their organization does provide healthcare navigator services) notes that they actually step back a bit due to, “the fact that we don’t provide direct services aside from the Navigator work. So that makes us a bit of an odd fit. I acknowledge that and I don’t want to hijack any conversations... But something more direct-services related, I don’t think we can help as much.” The same person also notes:

...a good chunk of the [Project CHARGE] meetings were spent talking about Navigator issues... and after hearing about it over and over again, I suggested that it might be useful to collect these issues systematically. I mean, we kept discussing and if we only shared within the group, I mean I don’t know what happens at the actual navigator meetings... So if we systematically collected these issues and shared with the powers that be, maybe something could change.

The suggestion that this member describes is actually the type of advocacy that Project CHARGE seems to have originally intended, rather than a focus on discussing questions related to direct services provision. These experiences highlight the groups shift from policy- and systems- advocacy and activism to a focus on direct service facilitation and funding.

Many interviewed also noted that during the same time period (2012-13), a few organizations left Project CHARGE, citing the following reasons: 1) that those groups that left were larger organizations that decided to focus on other funding opportunities that arose with the inception of the Affordable Care Act and various opportunities at the State level, and no

longer had interest in or time for Project CHARGE, and 2) that Project CHARGE was no longer seen as necessary or helpful for those organizations in terms of their mission and work, or growth in political power or resources. In a brief email communication with a social service organization that left Project CHARGE at that time, it was noted that reasons for leaving were related to a lack of resonance of Project CHARGE's mission and service orientation with the organization's mission and work. This suggests that Project CHARGE was increasingly viewed as service-oriented and less systems change, which would be relevant to a larger group of organizations.

As mentioned in an earlier chapter, comprising a group intended to push for larger social change and equity with social service providers may impact the nature of advocacy and activism, making it less contentious. In the case of Project CHARGE, there was a shift in focus from fighting for policy (i.e. language access, equity in healthcare, etc.) towards funding and resources for social service provision. With the targets of the advocacy often being the entities that regulate and fund service providers, it becomes increasingly difficult to be critical. One Project CHARGE member brought up a meeting in 2015 between Project CHARGE members and an elected official who directly funds health programming supporting the work of Navigators.

The Project CHARGE member states:

We had a meeting with Council Member X... and no one asked him about what happened with [health program] last year. [A Navigator] was even praising him – how grateful they were. I alone spoke about that we have to increase the amount of funding so others, so more, can benefit. No one likes to point it out – it's very hard... There were more people there, and no one says anything to him.

In that same conversation, the Project CHARGE member states that she wouldn't attend a meeting with that Council Member again.

Project CHARGE Today

Organizational membership in Project CHARGE through the first few months of 2017 includes 12 organizations plus the evaluator, who stayed on as a member of Project CHARGE although there has been no grant-funding for a few years. The coalition brought on a few new organizational members through the years, including Arab-American Family Support Center, South Asian Council for Social Services, and Mekong. All three organizations were involved in providing healthcare navigation services at some point (Mekong did not continue) – not all of them are Navigators through CACF's collaborative. As noted by a non-Navigator member at the time, "like some of [the participating agencies] when they joined thought it would be easier to get the funding. And that is understandable because it is mutual benefits."

The organizations that left Project CHARGE include Asian Americans for Equality, Womankind (formerly the New York Asian Women's Center), Asian Pacific Islander Coalition on HIV/AIDS, Kalusugan Coalition, and MAAWS for Global Justice. No reasons were mentioned by any involved in Project CHARGE for the two smaller organizations (MAAWS and Kalusugan Coalition) leaving. Following is a membership list from early in 2017:

- Coalition for Asian American Children and Families—pan-Asian children's advocacy organization – Project CHARGE coordinating organization
- Center for the Study of Asian American Health at New York University—a research center
- Charles B. Wang Community Health Center—a federally qualified health clinic

- Child Center of New York—a licensed mental health and substance abuse clinic
- Chinese-American Planning Council—a social service organization
- Family Health Project, Japanese American Association—a public advocacy and prevention education organization
- Henry Street Settlement—a provider of many health, behavioral, and support services
- Korean Community Services of Metropolitan New York—a social service organization
- Project Evaluator from Hunter College
- Immigrant Cancer Disparity Center - Memorial Sloan Kettering Hospital
- South Asian Council for Social Services – a social service organization
- Arab-American Family Support Center – a social service organization
- Mekong NYC – a community organizing and human services organization

Some member organizations specifically serve Asian ethnic groups – considered Asian American community-based organizations. Some are large institutions that serve multiple populations including but not limited to Asian Americans, such as hospitals and settlement houses. Some member organizations, both Asian and non-Asian, are mid-to-large social service organizations with budgets over \$3 million and that hold government contracts.

Project CHARGE: Cyclical nature of coalition-building

At the time of this study, Project CHARGE members report bring in a “lull period” with the work of the coalition, and limited action and participation of the group members.

Participants use the words “hope” and “want” in moments describing CHARGE's identity and future. Perhaps this alludes to a re-cycling of sorts in the life-cycle of Project CHARGE with the

re-emergence of a period of issue identification and group orientation that occurred when the coalition was first conceived. A CACF staff facilitator notes:

I think we're in this learning place. Because we're so not knowledgeable about what all's going on with DSRIP. Some are very confused... we don't know even where to start working on this. And trying to figure out what are the pieces... It reminds me of the first days when we were doing coalition work around the ACA, because we were trying to wrap our heads around it. And where do APA's fit into this, and what are we going to ask. I feel like we are in the same place with DSRIP. We are now like, what is this thing... how do we fit in? What can we do?

One member uses the same framing as the CACF facilitator in describing Project CHARGE's current situation, "Our recent meetings have been trying to re-strategize what are our next steps and moving forward. This reassessment is at a critical juncture. Still, the members see the value of Project CHARGE, they have passion and commitment. Otherwise, they would not stay and say that they have other fires to put out."

CACF staff themselves report that there isn't an agenda for the group to work towards, "Project CHARGE doesn't have - outside of the monthly meetings and updates - we don't necessarily have goals or deliverables we have to produce now." Many members expressed trust in the group and loyalties as reasons to stay, but some members longed for more for the group and state:

We are going in circles. We need to stop and figure out what we want to be the center piece for us that makes us, "Wow!" Maybe there's another opportunity. Like when we walk into City Hall, "this is Project CHARGE". At the State, "this is Project CHARGE". "It

happened because of Project CHARGE.” We want something big to happen because of Project CHARGE.

Another member notes that after strategic plan, the group was still confused. “We don’t know what are we doing – someone must have an idea. What can we do.” This statement resonates across agencies that seem to trust and hope that CACF as the lead agency can shape the group’s agenda. According to the most recent evaluation, most organizational members of Project CHARGE report their willingness to continue their participation in Project CHARGE – even if there isn’t any compensation for organizations that participate. One organization discusses the potential of leaving Project CHARGE in this critical period of rethinking the groups focus, “I think the bottom line is that if it’s something that we can benefit from, then we might continue.” As mentioned by CACF staff:

...now the challenge is that we have worked together for so long, how do we sustain the powerful thinking, and still make sure everybody stays together and not gone off to different ways. Because some participating organizations have grown to larger agencies. Some representatives have gone and new folks have come in their place.

Successes and Moments of Strength in Project CHARGE Coalition-Building

CACF staff and Project CHARGE members identified multiple strengths in the coalition-building processes used in sustaining Project CHARGE, although most of processes were informal and developed more organically through the work together. No one interviewed, including CACF staff, could identify a set strategy that the group undertook in coalition-building. Rather, they discussed certain aspects that were critical, as well as certain limitations in the structure and processes of the coalition.

All Project CHARGE members interviewed were generally very positive about the group and its functioning. It was apparent that there weren't many identifiable moments of tension in coalition-building. In fact, in response to an inquiry about any moments of tension in the group, one member responded that they would rather use the "trend" than "tension" as tension speaks to interpersonal dissonance not relevant to the group, but that in the coalition work of Project CHARGE, there may be trends that can be shifted or changed to be productive experiences for the group. It is possible that the lack of tension among coalition members is correlated to the general shift in the group towards service orientation and service provision. Being service oriented by nature might quell dissent or encourage compliance, as explained earlier.

Much of the coalition's alignment and lack of tensions, as identified by interview participants and observed throughout this study, was attributed to a number of critical determinants of successful long-term pan-ethnic organizational coalition-building:

Building trust with the lead organization and between each other. As stated by CACF staff, "some of [the organizations] had really bad collaborative relationships in the past. They had experiences where they would join coalitions and guess who gets all the glory. The lead. And they are like, no, we don't want that." A main focus of CACF in building trust was to make sure that the organizations that were part of Project CHARGE were recognized. From the start, CACF framed the value of the participating organizations stating, "we wouldn't be where we are without having the member orgs do what they do" in the communities they serve. Member organizations likewise felt their value-add was to share within Project CHARGE the

work they do within their specific Asian ethnic communities, and the various needs and challenges that communities and organizations face. A member notes that it was helpful:

...that we didn't have EDs or high-level staff involved with the planning. And even now... in many things the program staff are more willing to work with each other and refer to each other. Because sometimes EDs are more competitive or territorial. So, in that sense, the people assigned were more like middle managers and able to speak to the day-to-day work as well.

Additionally, CACF builds trust through sharing funding opportunities, being transparent about applying for various grants and "not applying when it's stepping on toes or competing with member organizations and direct services." CACF staff states they, "don't want to be greedy, rather let the smaller organizations go for [the funding]." This intentionality around resources seems especially critical to members given a resource-poor and -competitive environment. As mentioned previously, there is a general sentiment that organizations stay with the coalition mainly for reasons related to resources – funding as well as access to political power (which can lead to funding.)

Members also describe an acknowledgement that there might be individual staff at member organizations that aren't trusted by others. This made it important to include as much as possible, "people who have worked together before... so you get those people who have worked together to work on the coalition. There has to be some agreement and trust to begin with."

Starting from a common ground and selecting a common mission or focus. The group recognized that it isn't possible to work on every issue area. One member in attendance at the

inception of Project CHARGE describes a “huge brain-dump” that resulted in an agreement of organizational members to focus on healthcare access in the Asian American community in NYC as the key topical area as it was decided this is more inclusive of community organizations, rather than a specific disease or specific health issue (i.e. cardiovascular health, diabetes, cancer, etc.) that would limit organizational participation. As a member notes:

It’s been very helpful for partners to not only create commonality with their shared goal and shared advocacy. It made community partners see each other’s work in a new light where a lot of times different community members might only address certain factors of health, but together they are able to see how issues tie in, much more comprehensive (DV, insurance, poverty, etc)... The group is able to move forward on a united front – healthcare advocacy and issues.

Determining key policy priorities that are general enough but specific enough to focus on, and facilitating discussion to, “translate policy to practice”. One such policy priority area determined originally by the group as critical to the Asian American community was tackling language access policy, which requires a long-term strategy over a number of years. Important to assessing policy priorities was analyzing how policies impacted the work on the ground, and eliciting stories and anecdotes from organizational members that illustrate community challenges.

Creating opportunities for member organizations for increased funding, political power, and resources. The importance of having a goal of funding and political power in a resource-competitive environment was mentioned by every interview participant, and in a number of coalition meetings where Project CHARGE budgeting and sustainability were discussed.

Increasing access to funding and resources is looked upon by CACF staff as what keeps members invested. As explained by CACF staff, this includes the potential for member organizations to improve their ability to do the work, increased opportunities for training and professional development, and increased political power through access, as a collective, to decision-makers and elected officials.

Encouraging dialogue, recognizing voice, and engaging in informal group decision-making. As mentioned by an organizational member representative, a successful coalition requires a culture of encouraging all members to have a voice and a say in the decision-making process. “If you are going to be true to coalitions... everyone should have a voice in the decision-making process. If it’s not part of the culture – if not giving group a voice, it is just a project of... not a coalition. And that also has to translate to the person dedicated to the coalition.”

An example of encouraging voice was that the group regularly, as part of the group process, discussed who was at the table and who was missing and should be invited to join, regardless of organizational size and political power. Organizational members speak of the group’s mindset to be as inclusive of diversity as possible. A member states, “I think we (Project CHARGE) don’t care of size of organizations. That’s one of the reasons CHARGE succeeded – we haven’t been as status conscious as some coalitions have been.” Additionally, a member notes that not having Executive Directors or other high-level staff also helped to encourage dialogue and recognize voice as, “in many things the program staff are more willing to work with each other and refer to each other. Because sometimes Executive Directors are more competitive or territorial.” In this way the group seems to cultivate a culture that

attempts to minimize the egos of members, in an attempt to move the coalition forward productively.

Many interviewed believe that having various ethnic representation is a strength and legitimizes to mainstream and decision-makers both the group itself as well as Asian American community needs. CACF identifies that part of their group facilitation includes taking the time to elicit input on issues discussed from all groups, and using a “step-up step-down” process during meetings where people who speak often are encouraged at times to take a step back to allow for other voices.

Finally, although there wasn't a set democratic process, there was an acknowledgment of a group decision-making process. A member remarks, “There's a lack of rigidity that I think is refreshing. The group is not in the mold of one person – it's kind of a lot of people putting their 10-cents in.” Another member remarks:

Right, for some reason, we did have different voices but in the end we were always able to compromise... We did have different views, different folks. So we would say, ok, so from the discussion we would add something to make sure yours and mine voices are considered. To compromise. So, if I am saying A and you are saying B, we propose C which has some of A and some of B.

Commitment of the right organizational representatives at the table. Most interviewed felt that a critical factor in the success of a coalition was the buy-in, commitment, and shared understanding of the organizational representative chosen or assigned to be a part of the coalition. As mentioned by a number of the members interviewed, the organizational representatives have to “get it.” Many members reported that changes in organizational

representatives are a main factor that determines the organization's commitment to and involvement in Project CHARGE over time.

One member acknowledges the difficulty in getting that commitment from organizations and organizational representatives, stating that the group has to be really "inspirational" and that there needs to be something in it for the members who sacrifice their time to be a part of the group. Multiple organizational representatives in Project CHARGE discussed what they appreciate about being a part of the group and what helps them stay motivated as organizational representatives. Some noted the opportunities that Project CHARGE offered for professional development, networking, and training opportunities; some mentioned the opportunity to learn and connect to other Asian ethnic groups and to larger Asian American community issues in a way that aligns with not only their work but also their personal collective identity, and many in a way that they lack at their own jobs that might focus on only one issue area, one ethnic community, or not on direct services at all; and others mention that they look forward to a change of pace that Project CHARGE provides by allowing them to leave their offices and be in a different environment, thinking about things differently, and with different people.

A few members discussed shared experiences within Project CHARGE that spurred their investment in the group. One experience was a trip early on to Albany to conduct some State-level health related advocacy – specifically the bus ride to and from where group members were able to connect to one another and build community. Many members who joined after the initial group formed mention that they began their involvement in Project CHARGE as a task assigned to them, but then grew to understand the larger connections in advocacy and larger

social change, and developed an awareness and “community mindset” through their participation in Project CHARGE.

Conducting regular and consistent organizational meetings and annual planning sessions, along with having an evaluator. Every person interviewed highlights the importance of the regular monthly meetings. Many identify the value in shared agenda-setting where any group member is able to input on the agenda for the monthly meeting. Additionally, members and CACF staff speak of the yearly strategic planning meetings as critical in grounding and setting a direction for the group, although the plan isn’t revisited by the group through the year. A few members brought up the value of having an evaluator present to give “input on what can be improved to make the group better or more effective.”

Having a dedicated leader and coordinating organization. CACF has coordinated Project CHARGE since its inception, with the same staff facilitator for all but the coalition’s first year. When asked about qualities of leadership that members find successful in Project CHARGE, one member responds, “the style. It’s very positive and enthusiastic, and not coercive.” CACF facilitation was described by both CACF staff and other Project CHARGE members as encouraging of dialogue and group self-regulation, with facilitation when necessary. For example, the facilitator tended to step in more during substantive discussions on strategy and at times when group members required education on particular issues or substantive areas. In one instance observed, the facilitator intervened (along with others in the group) in an educator capacity when there were discussions around sexual orientation that were marginalizing of the LGBTQ community.

The CACF facilitator was also well regarded as a leader in the community and valued for their political and other contacts on local, State and Fed levels. As mentioned by a member, the:

...lead organization has to have a culture of not wanting to always be out in the front... and the lead organization and director has to be transparent about all the processes and finances. The budget – how much everyone is going to get, what organizations can contribute and why – being transparent and realistic.

Additional aspects of leadership that were highlighted include being organized and making time to plan and send word on meetings so members attend. Also noted was the importance in creating clear agendas with input from the group, as well as preparing members for important meetings and presentations with decision-makers.

Challenges and Moments of Tension in Project CHARGE's work and coalition-building

A competitive resource environment and resource dependency. Materials developed through the initial Health Through Action Kellogg funding on Project CHARGE states¹⁴:

The greatest organizational challenge Project CHARGE faces is the tight fiscal climate. Raising funds from private foundations, corporations, and individual donors is increasingly difficult, as is sparing staff to participate in initiatives that are outside an organization's core responsibilities. Despite these challenges, partners are committed to working toward their shared vision of health equity for the city's Asian American and Pacific Islander residents.

¹⁴ file:///C:/Users/gunda/OneDrive/Documents/CACF/hta_new_york_brochure.pdf (February 2010)

A lack of resources along with the competitive environment faced by member organizations continues to influence Project CHARGE as it has turned to be heavily focused on finding funding sources to support member organizations. The marketization of nonprofits, including competition for contracts and funding from donors increasingly looking for new collaborations and returns on investments, has been discussed as compromising nonprofits ability to focus on systemic change, issues of justice and equality, and collective action (Eikenberry and Kluver, 2004).

Project-related documents reviewed through this research and that were shared publicly (flyers and advocacy agendas) or with funders (grant reports) about Project CHARGE are mostly from the first six to seven years of Project CHARGE, when the project was funded. Between 2014 and 2015, Project CHARGE completed its funded work. A member pinpoints the competitive environment and the need to position Project CHARGE for funding in a monthly meeting: “Project CHARGE has a uniqueness that others can’t build. We have to sell what we have that no one else has in the same legitimate way.” Consistent with this statement, Project CHARGE seems to be moving toward a focus on topical areas that might result in collaborative or widely applicable funding opportunities for member organizations. As a member states, this focus on funding for member organizations is “understandable because [the coalition] is about mutual benefits.”

For example, in group discussions during monthly meetings about the possibility of Project CHARGE hosting a health-focused conference for the Asian American community, initial topic areas suggested as a focus included various critical issues such as the anti-immigrant sentiment and impact on health or a lack of attention to the Asian American community in

mental health programming. Funding challenges were brought up, and the conversation on the conference shifted to having the plenary session and large pieces of the conference focusing on new corporate and individual fundraising ideas and insights.

Another example is a discussion during the 2016 strategic planning session where the group chose the larger topic to focus on for the upcoming year, DSRIP. DSRIP, the Delivery System Reform Incentive Payment (DSRIP) Program, is NY State's program to redesign Medicaid funding to be used to prevent avoidable hospital use¹⁵ and plans to spend over \$6 Billion on programming. It was recommended to Project CHARGE at the strategic planning meeting that the group's focus shift to DSRIP:

Member 1: If I were to choose one, I would choose DSRIP. There's \$8 Billion in this going to hospitals.

Member 2: They are not including CBOs!

Group: That's the fight.

Member 2: Where is the money for the community? The "Big guys" get all the money and small guys are left out. They come to us [community organizations] for help.

Member 1: Project CHARGE is in the perfect position to address this.

One member then pointed out, "DSRIP can open up direct service funding. But can it open up advocacy funding? Is that going to mobilize organizations to participate in Project CHARGE advocacy efforts?" This was immediately followed by CACF staff discussing the lack of funding and funding prospects for Project CHARGE and its members. The question about the

¹⁵ https://www.health.ny.gov/health_care/medicaid/redesign/dsrp/ (accessed January 3, 2018)

connection to larger advocacy or to systemic or social change issues was no longer discussed. Members then began to discuss how focusing on DSRIP continues to fit within the group's larger mission of improving health access by fighting for funding for community organizations that are often providing the front line of healthcare to communities.

In subsequent monthly meetings, it became clear that not all members understood DSRIP and their organizations weren't planning on getting involved. At least three member-organization staff relayed concerns over this topic choice stating that it isn't relevant to their agency's work – during monthly group meetings and interviews. Another member whose organization is involved in DSRIP explains the focus on funding, stating:

...some agencies don't know about DSRIP, and whether the money can really go to your agency – that's a question. Because your agency may have nothing to do with DSRIP.

So, what would you fight for? There's nothing for you to fight for. Just agencies that are relevant to DSRIP, they'd have a point to be a part of it.

Lack of a strong agenda/focus. As mentioned earlier, it is likely that both the shift in nature of the group from a focus on policy advocacy and health equity to a service-oriented and resource-focused group affected the group's analysis and agenda. Many members interviewed couldn't identify CHARGE's policy agenda or focus. One wondered whether Project CHARGE's focus was important enough to motivate the group. Some spoke of the hope and possibility of CHARGE regaining an advocacy focus in the future. A member states:

In terms of health, we have to pick something that is overlooked but is something that is severe. Hopefully CHARGE will fight for AA community – I mean, if some of the agencies

pull out, then we have to find a focus within the groups that remain and it may not be so broad.

Even CACF staff state:

Because CHARGE doesn't have - Outside of the monthly meetings and updates, we don't necessarily have goals or deliverables we have to produce. For the most part, ever since I came to CACF, it's been pretty much a... either regular monthly meetings to get feedback on what's happening at the State, local and fed level – to hear what partners have been experiencing as far as their health access work.

Another member adds that there is a lack of clarity in the meeting agendas and lack of focus in discussion:

I think if we had an agenda or something, maybe we wouldn't be as rushed in meetings. For example, we wanted to do this panel/seminar, we knew we wanted to do something – whether big or small. But if we spent time planning it or doing something... It's not clear. It would be good to spend some time on it.”

The same member states about Project CHARGE more generally, “Even after strategic planning, I'm still confused. We don't know what are we doing – someone must have an idea. What can we do.”

Unclear relationship between Project CHARGE and the lead organization, CACF. The distinction and relationship between Project CHARGE and its coordinating organization, CACF, are not clear. Although CACF coordinated and supported Project CHARGE from its inception by providing staffing who built trust with the coalition and by providing various resources to the coalition, both Project CHARGE members and CACF staff describe various tensions that existed

from the inception of Project CHARGE. From the beginning in establishing trust, the CACF staff facilitator reports that the CACF ED wanted the staff facilitator to take a larger role in providing an agenda and deciding what the group should do. The facilitator speaks of it as, “tricky when the ED wants their agenda. But once it was set aside and I let the group be accountable to itself, not the ED [of CACF], things happened. Not reporting back to ED but accountable to the group itself.” From the beginning then, there was distance and tension created between Project CHARGE and CACF.

Another indication of confusion in the relationship came about during a monthly meeting when Project CHARGE members were discussing an opportunity for funding which required some legal assistance with contracts. A member asked for support from the coalition for the member organizations in receiving pro bono legal assistance that required a 501c3 tax exemption status. The CACF facilitator replied that Project CHARGE does not have a 501c3 and couldn't help to support the members in that capacity. In that instance, coalition members seemed confused. At no point did the CACF staff facilitator offer support through CACF, the coordinating agency of Project CHARGE, which has a 501c3 and could support the work of Project CHARGE.

As stated by a CACF staff, “Project CHARGE is a very nebulous entity within [CACF's] policy work.” It was directly linked but unclear how. Member organizations also confused the two with a member organization attributing the Navigator funding as distributed by Project CHARGE when in reality, it was CACF who supported the Navigator program as well, apart from Project CHARGE. This confusion might lend to confusion in the structure and process of the coalition and have limited the capacity of the coalition.

Lack of a formalized democratic process for decision-making. Although many members of Project CHARGE and CACF staff discuss the importance and value within the coalition of consensus-building, the coalition didn't have a discernable democratic process. Decisions were made mostly through discussion of pros and cons, after which the group "just came to a consensus." Many times, CACF staff facilitators would take a large role in decision-making. In an interview, the Project CHARGE evaluator spoke about their influence in group decision-making, stating, "as an evaluator I have kind of also pushed my own views on this too. Like when [we] did the needs assessment, I was strongly pushing for the group to get involved in DSRIP. And they did!" A member states, as a response to the way Project CHARGE builds consensus that, "You've got to have a certain larger part – the middle part – has to be pretty much consensus. If you have one or two on either fringe, who can't be part of the consensus, either they will drop out or they will take the hint that they can't be part of the group..."

Specifically, for those members that did not participate very often in monthly Project CHARGE meetings, a member states that "the trend was either to discount their opinion to some degree because they weren't always there to voice it. Or to consider them less than responsible. Or to consider them less than knowledgeable." Additionally, it was noted that since the inception of Project CHARGE, it was understood that the participating groups had to "be on their best behavior" in order to gain the original funding. Therefore, cooperation was expected of the groups and dissent or difference was downplayed.

As mentioned earlier, the group discussed many times through 2016 the idea of hosting a conference, with members initially interested in including issues such as fear among immigrant communities, especially Muslim communities; lack of access to healthcare services;

and specifically a lack of mental health services. The conference dialogue did shift quickly to a focus also on funding, as mentioned above. But ultimately, the dialogue shifted as CACF staff facilitators began discussing collaboration of Project CHARGE with other groups hosting conferences:

If [another conference] is ok with it, maybe we can carve out a session and do a session there. Another option is to ask [another organization] if we can do a session in their conference. Maybe [a research institute] is doing something or having a conference, I don't know...

Conference discussion then focused on collaborating with an existing conference in the community with a focus on aging, and co-sponsored by AARP. Members responded during a monthly meeting:

Member 1: For my agency, I don't know if we can be involved in the conference for because we don't have any programs for seniors in our agency, and for healthcare ACA, we only provide till Medicare – age 65.

Member 2: I don't think Project CHARGE has the expertise – like we don't even know who are the groups providing services to seniors...

Member 3: I think we could have a panel on – we recognize that there are no direct programs in the metropolitan area colleges that are set up to encourage young people to go into the field of geriatrics – develop a program for home care, for day care.

Member 4: This is the first time I've talked about this, I don't know about all of you...

General: Yeah, this is the first time we discussed this.

Member 5: Seems like if you are not directly involved with this, you are not very familiar with it. I think that's true on an individual level basis and as an organization.

Still, CACF staff decided to move forward with Project CHARGE's participation in the conference on aging. At a subsequent meeting:

CACF facilitator discussing conference tracks: The one that sticks out to me is multi-sector partnerships and coalitions, because we are a coalition. That one is: how can we utilize multisector partnerships and coalitions to better support health aging initiatives. What roles can FBOs, CBOs and government agencies and local businesses play in working together towards healthful minority communities.

Member: So, we are doing aging and seniors?

CACF: Yeah, that's the theme but we are also doing it around caregivers, so that intergenerational focus also... Just for some background, Project CHARGE has talked about putting together a conference in the past. But I believe we decided that we didn't have enough resources and human time and work capacity to do our own. But one of our partners has their biannual conference in the fall, so we could put together a panel and host it.

The lack of a clear process in reaching consensus seems to have contributed to confusion and at times inattention towards members' input or perspectives. A member who attends regularly and participates in Project CHARGE discusses a level of confusion and disappointment in Project CHARGE's decision-making:

We talked about the conference. But we didn't talk about... what can we do about it? Is it worth it? Should we spend money on it? And there was a change – from having a

conference to only having a panel. Why? Why change – why we can't have a whole day conference? Like [another coalition organization] had a big conference – everyone knows them now – city, state, nationwide... that's what I want for Project CHARGE.

Assumed congruences. In many instances over the course of observation in the field, as well as explained through interviews, there were tensions that arose through coalition work that went unaddressed as a group or coalition. It is presumed that one reason these tensions aren't addressed in the group is because of an assumed set of congruences – both in terms of identity and ideology. As explained by one member:

We have no ground rules. We didn't start out thinking we needed ground rules. I think sometimes it's how you meet your expectations. So, if your expectations are that everybody will help, you don't have to define what help means. Well, we wanted to improve the health of Asians – so to do so, we wanted housing, we wanted this and that.

One incident that was independently brought up in three interviews and that occurred before field observation began was a moment of tension around the City's decision to celebrate and close schools for Eid, a Muslim holiday. After the meeting officially adjourned, some members of Project CHARGE were discussing the decision as a win for the Asian American community in NYC, when, as described by a member present:

One of the partners from a Chinese American organization made a comment, "Hey, why did they get it, we've been fighting for this for so long..." and the Muslim-serving orgs said, "Hey, we've been fighting for this, too."

The CACF staff present did address the remark directly with the person who stated it, but that conversation apparently wasn't heard by others. What was apparent to those present was the tensions that can exist within a diverse group of Asian American organizations, representing various communities. This incident also speaks to the competition for political power, resources, and attention that occurs between the various Asian American groups. As noted by the CACF staff facilitator, other instances where funding was discussed also led to comments from one ethnic group about why other organizations serving different ethnic groups were selected for funding over their organization. The CACF staff facilitator stated that at times like these, they reminded the group members that all groups are in need and fighting for resources.

Another set of moments of tension was observed when community-based organizational members discussed negative feelings towards larger institutions. At least three times during observed meetings, negative comments were made during group meetings about large hospital institutions. Two institutions are active members of Project CHARGE. At one instance in discussing a plan for participation in a conference, a community-based organization member states:

Member 1: 10 years ago, I know what [hospital] was doing about a conference in the community for people in the community to learn about it... So now what's happening. We need to really look at what's happening in all of our institutions. And say, hey what's going on here? [Hospital] is still getting money now. And who are they learning from? The community! And [hospital] is still getting \$\$ from Washington... But it's also all the institutions – could be any one of the universities. And the research money they are getting. And how much they are learning

from the community – and how much they are taking that and teaching their young medical students about what’s going on. I wonder how many classes they have for students on APA. We really have to say to all these institutions, you can’t just take the money from Washington and pick our brains, at our expense, for you to get more money! It’s just not right!

Member 2: I was wondering what you had in mind. Like within the context of this conference – it’s not the institution that is putting together the conference...

Member 1: Oh, you better believe it is...

In the interview with the representative from the hospital institution, the member explains:

I don’t know if you’ve noticed this or been at meetings where maybe some negative things said about large hospitals or academic institutions, so it’s a little bit awkward... it’s a bit tricky at times to navigate that... And I acknowledge that and I don’t want to hijack any conversations, so that’s why I step back a little bit.

These moments of tension that remain unaddressed through the coalitions work exemplify the assumed congruences that lead to confusion and also to certain members’ input unaddressed.

The analysis provided in this chapter shows a complex and evolving organizational coalition that is clearly centered around a pan-ethnic collective identity. The coalition is impacted by multiple forces including, but not limited to various externally-driven challenges and opportunities (for example, resources and political opportunities), composition and organizational membership, and leadership. But it is clear that Project CHARGE, as a pan-ethnic organizational coalition, continues to exist and hold value for its organizational members. In Chapter Six, I delve deeper into the role of the Asian American pan-ethnic identity within

Project CHARGE, and use data to provide a conceptualization of identity work as a critical set of processes in which the coalition is engaged.

CHAPTER 6: PROJECT CHARGE - ETHNIC IDENTITY AND IDENTITY WORK

Through this research, it is apparent that a pan-Asian identity runs as a strong current underlying the concerted movement of Project CHARGE. The Asian American identity is often deployed in dialogue within interviews and as observed moments in coalition meetings, which will be explained in this and the next chapter. The Asian American or pan-Asian identity of the group can be seen as a unifying force, sustaining the group through significant tensions and challenges. As noted through interviews, language framing Project CHARGE as an Asian American or Asian Pacific American coalition as a key aspect of the group's identity is resonant across members of Project CHARGE, CACF staff facilitators of Project CHARGE, and Project CHARGE written materials. It is clear that CACF plays a large role in the framing of the Asian American pan-ethnic identity as many times, members refer to the value of attending trainings by CACF and having CACF provide "talking points" for the group on how to talk about Project CHARGE and the issues at hand prior to important meetings with decision-makers and elected officials. Relatedly, CACF has a large say in the nature and focus of the group and also the creation of all Project CHARGE's materials. This influence of CACF was apparent through observations of the discussions around the group's focus, during a strategic planning session and also through the many months of deliberation about Project CHARGE's participation in a conference addressing aging in the Asian American community, which was explained in previous chapters.

All but one staff representative of Project CHARGE member organizations who were present in monthly coalition meetings personally identify as an Asian nationality or ethnic identity, although none personally identify as "Asian American". As explained in the literature

review, the pan-ethnic Asian American identification is a collective constructed and politicized identity. Although individuals tend to personally identify with their specific national ethnic origin (Wong et al., 2011) the Asian pan-ethnic identity is more often chosen as a collective identity when prompted (Lien et al., 2003).

Collective (Group) Identity of Project CHARGE. There is clear framing of the coalition as having an Asian American collective identity. As stated by one member during an interview when asked about Project CHARGE's identity:

We have a lot more similarity of issues and we are all under Project CHARGE. I don't think we ever have to remind ourselves that we are Asian American. It just comes with it. And I see a lot of value in that and that's why I am staying in it. And I feel like my organization should be a part of that conversation.

Another member states during an interview when asked whether, and if so how, the Asian American identity is spoken, unspoken, or performed through the coalition:

Our Asian American identity isn't just a silent glue. I don't see it as being completely unspoken. I mean, we just openly talk about these issues being specific to Asian American communities. We aren't talking about helping communities broadly – we are thinking about the language and cultural issues impacting our communities.

Another similar framing to the question of the identity of Project CHARGE:

Definitely the focus on the Asian American communities. Definitely. Because we are often left out about conversations about minorities in America. And some of the issues we are working on – like language access, cultural stigma around accessing healthcare – some of those things are similar and resonate with each other.

As observed above, the Asian American identity is often (not always, as explained below) deployed in moments within or internal to the coalition as framed using the term, “our community” issues, challenges, and concerns – within coalition meetings, among members in informal chatting before and after meetings, and during interviews. When asked about the use of “our community” during an interview, one member responds, “I guess that maybe because I’m Asian, someone who isn’t Asian might have a different perspective... But I get that it is the ‘unspoken’ community. Many times, people don’t specify, and they mean Asian American.” There are many moments during coalition meetings when the members discuss the needs and issues facing “our communities”, for example, “Can we have a panel on our communities? To educate, to talk about what we have and what we need. How can we help our communities? Because we don’t have anything for seniors in our communities.”

All but one member expressed the centrality of the Asian American identity to the coalition and their contentedness with the group’s ethnic identity as Asian American. This member representative is from a community-based organization that is a Project CHARGE member and that doesn’t identify solely as Asian. Additionally, the member representative themselves doesn’t identify as Asian American. In response to the question of Project CHARGE’s identity, this member expressed a longing for a stronger group identity apart from an ethnic identification. They state:

I want to see more action in CHARGE. Because it’s the same groups over and over again. Same groups, same issues. I think there is something missing... I want for us to walk in and people say, here is Project CHARGE walking in... there’s got to be more.

During the same interview, they explain:

It is very important for [my organization] to be separate than Asian. But we are also a part of Asia. And we are part of this coalition... I am proud for them to organize for me to be there. It opens a door for me to talk about my language, my community, and community issues... My community doesn't have a coalition, yet.

The member discusses how they would like to start a similar coalition for their community. As the interview proceeds, they also identify Project CHARGE as the main coordinators of the healthcare Navigator grant; as a partner for grants in the future; and a conduit to have various needs heard. It is clear that many times during the interview, this member confounds the roles of Project CHARGE with those of the coordinating organization, CACF. This confusion can be due to the lack of clarity in the work of Project CHARGE. But the lack of alignment with the Asian American identity on the part of the organization and the member representative seems to also be a contributing factor to the issues and confusions that arise with their involvement in the coalition.

Pan-ethnic Identity and Why Organizations Stay. The consistent framing of "our community" as an Asian American pan-ethnic collective identity as well as the previously explained member's confusion and need for a more clearly defined group identity outside of being Asian American all serve to strengthen the argument that the Asian American pan-ethnic identity of: 1) the member representatives, 2) the member organizations, and 3) Project CHARGE as a coalition all play a role in Project CHARGE's sustainability as a coalition.

Additionally, the coalition membership continues to stay and to participate in meetings and other actions despite, as explained in the previous chapter, the lack of a substantive agenda and focus. Members including those who are from Asian ethnic community organizations, and

especially those that hadn't been with the coalition since its inception, have great difficulty in identifying the core work or purpose of Project CHARGE. In one interview, the researcher had to remind an active member representative, who consistently attends monthly meetings, about the group's goals and what the group had decided to focus on during its strategic plan.

Therefore, although the Asian American identity plays a role in sustaining the coalition, it is also clear that the mere aligning of collective identities does not address the various confusions around the goals and purpose of Project CHARGE as a coalition, as well as its lack of substantive focus.

In exploring further how the Asian American identity works to help sustain the participation of organizational members within the coalition, a few different reasons emerge with mostly all revolving around access to resources and political power. Larger organizations that serve multiple populations including Asian American communities discuss the increased legitimacy that their organization may benefit from by being a member of Project CHARGE, especially in supporting their claims to a larger audience of consumers and funders about how they reach and serve diverse communities. As noted by one large organization member, "It makes us look good to tell funders that we work with these community organizations, that we are part of these coalitions that are advocating for better policies... maybe us maintaining these connections with people doing advocacy and policy is how we see our link to shaping policies." As stated by another member, "Well, for the bigger organizations..., it's something they add on their lists of what they do. Aside for the individual who wants to come to it."

Community-based and many times small-mid budget size Asian American-led and serving organizations express their desire for political and resource opportunities that the

coalition presents, as well as the legitimacy and ability to advocate at a community level that they are otherwise unable to access and that the coalition affords to them. Almost all Asian American community-based organizations interviewed, both small and large, note the barriers that tight staffing and resources, as well as government funding and the regulatory environments that accompany the funding pose for organizations to conduct advocacy and participate in larger social change efforts. One navigator described their limitations to advocate with the City and State because “we are funded by the State so they don’t let us advocate.” A community organization member notes how Project CHARGE “provides a platform to make changes on a policy level, which impacts a lot of people and which we can’t do otherwise.”

A few members surmise that those organizations that left Project CHARGE over the years are larger Asian American organizations that neither need further connection to the Asian American community, as they are located within and serve the population, nor political and resource opportunities for service provision that may be afforded through Project CHARGE. That those organizations that are already well-established service organizations in Asian American communities don’t feel the benefits of being part of the coalition, also aligns with the idea that Project CHARGE has shifted in nature to become more service-oriented through the years, with a focus on resources for social services. These observations were not able to be supported through this research as the organizations that left Project CHARGE weren’t interviewed. One very large (greater than \$20Million budget) organization that remains an active member of Project CHARGE describes among their main reasons to stay involved a loyalty to CACF, the coordinating organization, and the historical policy work that CACF has done. Still, the group expresses doubt that they would continue to be active if the coalition

veers too far off from issues that the organization finds relevant to their communities or their services.

Although requiring more exploration and not the focus of this study, individual participants also expressed a connection between their personal and politicized identification with the Asian American collective identity and that of the coalition as reasons that they stay committed to the group. For example, staff representatives of larger organizations and institutions talk about Project CHARGE providing them with a connection they don't get through their work and their personal feelings of wanting to work on behalf of the Asian American community. In fact, one representative from a large non-Asian American specific organization reports that their organization does not benefit as much from participation as they individually do, and that they are unclear of whether the organization would continue to participate if they themselves left. This member describes the following:

As an API, I feel like I should [be a part of Project CHARGE] because it's my personal will. So even though Project CHARGE funding was ended, I didn't really tell [my organization] it ended, so I can still go. In the end it becomes more personal than organizational. As an API, I think if I can do more, then I will try to.

As mentioned in the start of this section, it is likely that some combination of an organizations' AND an individual member representatives' alignment with the Asian American pan-ethnic identity contributes to their commitment to Project CHARGE and the coalition's identity as a pan-ethnic Asian American coalition.

Fluidity in the pan-ethnic Asian American identity. It is important to note that at the same time that Project CHARGE is primarily a pan-ethnic Asian American coalition, all

organizational members representing Asian ethnic-specific communities and community organizations decisively report their role in the coalition as representing the particular Asian ethnic group or nationality served by their organization, and the issues that are perhaps unique to those particular communities. Therefore, there is a level of fluidity in how the pan-ethnic Asian American identity is deployed during moments of coalition-building. Members' language can weave in and out of framing "our community" and "my community", referring to their specific community as distinct and different from the pan-ethnic Asian American community. This can be seen in the quote above from the non-Asian-specific organizational member discussing their organizations differentiation and distance from the Asian American identity of the group. The fluidity in how the Asian American identity is deployed will be discussed in the following section addressing the idea of Identity Work. A member notes:

I think that we understand that we are all in AA oriented groups. Like for myself, I am mostly representing a Chinese organization. But I am not Chinese. So, for me, I am representing the org, but I also contribute my personal experience in the nonprofit AA community. And that is also similar for everyone. They are representing their group, but also their personal background, their ethnicity. But as a whole, we are all in it as an Asian Americans group. I think we all identify ourselves as our separate Asian ethnicity, but we also represent Asian Americans as a whole. Sometimes our personal and organizational identity is different, and also similar. I feel like I am representing not just Chinese Americans but Asian Americans in general... I'm Filipino, someone else is Chinese or Pakistani. It is very interesting dynamic where you can be individually ethnic but you can come together and coalesce.

Identity Work in Pan-ethnic coalitions. As the Asian American collective and pan-ethnic identity is valuable in sustaining Project CHARGE, it might follow that the collective ethnic Asian American identity is a clear resource for coalition-building. As explained in the literature review, studies involving individuals have shown that in order for any collective identity to be a resource for mobilization, the identity requires some level of politicization or activation (Simon, 2011; Van Zomeren et al, 2008; Klandermans et al, 2008; Klandermans & Weerd, 2000). Multiple scholars point to the politicized nature of the Asian American collective identity and label this as *panethnicity*, which, in addition to a level of identification, also includes a sense of group political consciousness or solidarity beyond identification with the collective (Min, 2010; Chong and Rogers, 2005; Wong et al., 2005; Masuoka, 2006). This politicized collective identity also has the potential to influence mobilization behaviors of individuals, communities, and organizations, although the application at an organizational level is much less studied.

It is important to note that the meaning of the Asian American identity and which groups are included often remains vague and confusing to many. This ambiguity is natural as the Asian American identity is itself a complex and socio-politically woven identity (Wong et al. 2011). According to the National Asian American Survey conducted in 2016 many people, including Asian Americans, are still not clear about who falls under the Asian American category, and the broad and all-encompassing identity is prone to being misunderstood and stereotyped.¹⁶

¹⁶ See <https://www.nbcnews.com/think/news/opinion-outrage-over-discrimination-how-do-we-define-asian-american-ncna757586>

This section takes a closer look at an analysis of moments within the coalition that speak to how the Asian American identity is politicized and deployed as a political collective identity; and thereby how it is maintained as a resource to Project CHARGE. The process, or work, of maintaining the Asian American identity as a relevant resource for coalition-building is what is termed in this study as *identity work*. As explained in the literature review, identity work has been used in organization studies literature for many years, although for the most part in looking at individuals and as identity/collective identity relates to dynamics between individuals and organizations. Sveningsson and Alvesson (2003) in their seminal work explain that identity work at its core considers identities not as static, but rather explores the dynamic set of processes, such as those that form, repair, and strengthen, and that might create and recreate a sense of identity.

In this study of Project CHARGE, and as explained in the review of literature and methodology, I consider identity work as the processes through which the Asian American identity is deployed in coalition-building work with the overall intent of sustaining and building the coalition and its work. Specifically, I focus identity work on if and how identity is activated and destabilized in coalition-building. This study finds that identity work in the forms of both activation and destabilization of the pan-ethnic Asian American identity is critical to the politicization, relevance, and sustenance of the Asian American identity as a resource to coalition building in Project CHARGE. For the purposes of describing the identity work in Project CHARGE, I will use the term *identity deconstruction* as opposed to *destabilization* from this point on, given feedback from Project CHARGE members who are wary that using the terminology destabilization might imply a structural destabilization of the coalition itself.

One important limitation of this study is that most of the opportunities to participate and observe the coalition during the time I was in the field happened to be internal moments to the coalition – among and between coalition members in meetings and interviews. There were unfortunately few meetings I observed that coalition members organized with mainstream and government decision-makers that they (Project CHARGE) were trying to impact. This is partly due to the lull that the coalition was in with their advocacy and systems change work.

Still, there were many moments observed when those outside the coalition were invited to coalition meetings in order to share information and educate the group on the work they do in their respective organizations and how that might benefit Asian American communities. At times there were remarks directly made to these “outsiders” (guests or visitors), but mostly the remarks observed about the community were relegated to the spaces internal to Project CHARGE and coalition members.

A. Asian American IDENTITY ACTIVATION

Moments of pan-ethnic Asian American identity activation are clearly present in the coalition-building work of Project CHARGE, as seen through both observations and interviews. As noted in earlier chapters, the Asian American identity is seen as a large part of the definition of the group identity itself. The Asian American identity is also clearly outlined in materials distributed publicly with Project CHARGE described as an, “advocacy collaborative to address health equity and access issues in Asian Pacific American communities.”¹⁷ Moments of identity activation occur during meetings and discussions internal to the coalition – about the coalition and during coalition meetings. Identity activation also occurs during dialogue or description of

¹⁷ <http://cacf.org/home/what-we-do/advocacy-equity/health/project-charge/>

coalition members' interactions with mainstream or other organizations. Internally directed (moments within and about the coalition) and externally directed (moments referring to interactions outside of the coalition) identity activation use slightly different framings that will be discussed below.

As explained in the Methods chapter of this study, moments of identity activation are those that can be typically ascribed to the politicization (Azzi, 2011; Chrysochoou and Lyons, 2011; Simon, 2011; Klandermans et al, 2008; Simon and Klandermans, 2001) and amplification (Snow and McAdam, 2000) of the pan-ethnic Asian American identity. This can be through growing an Asian American consciousness around shared struggles and grievances, possibly in the form of sharing experiences of isolation, exclusion, various threats, and segregation; facilitating feelings of Asian American solidarity and pride; and bolstering feelings that Asian Americans, as a minority group, belong to the larger polity and society. Growing an Asian American group consciousness around shared grievances and struggles has been viewed as a form of boundary-heightening or brightening (Okamoto 2003, 2006) – accentuating feelings of us vs. them that can strengthen a pan-ethnic identity.

Internally Directed. Moments of identity activation that occur within and refer to Project CHARGE members themselves are clearly seen in interactions that define the coalition's collective identity as Asian American, with examples given in previous sections of this chapter. There is a clear and constant "Our Community" framing of the Asian American community that is exemplified in moments when members of Project CHARGE speak up around the meeting table about shared grievances in the community. The quote above in which a member discusses the issues faced particularly by senior citizens in "our community" exemplifies such

moments of activation through shared grievances. In another example of a similar moment of activation, a member notes when speaking of a possible focus of the group, “There’s a new mental health initiative from the First Lady of NYC, but how do we fit in that? Where is it for our communities?”

Yet another way that the “Our Community” frame is used in activating the Asian American identity within the coalition is in the form of joking, mocking, and sometimes berating of the Asian American community. These interactions often highlight the stereotyping and segregation of Asian American communities, and the isolation and exclusion that Asian Americans face. Most often the mocking or joking is only delivered by a few lead voices of the group including the CACF facilitator and outspoken members. Instances are poignant and can serve to indoctrinate and motivate the members present by heightening boundaries between the Asian American community and other communities. In the following instance, “our” and “we” is used to refer to Asian American:

Member 1: But part of it is our own problem... we don’t advocate, we don’t make noise. You know, we’ve sort of given people an out for not dealing with us because we haven’t advocated for ourselves in a way that makes them feel like they have to do it. I mean, it’s one thing to say nicely, [in a mockingly high voice...] “Oh, we have to have a ...”
[Group laughs... heads nod, people say, yeah, yeah...]

Member 2: [In an authoritative voice...] We need to be like, “We have three recommendations, we demand this...”

Member 3: Yeah, that’s the way we have to say it.

In another instance, an Asian American staff from a member organization explains a conference track for an upcoming event that Project CHARGE will be participating in. Another member asks a few times for the person speaking to speak up. After a number of requests, people around the table stand up and switch seats so the member who can't hear could be closer to the person speaking. Following is an instance of mocking:

Member 1: Is it a little bit better? I am going to try to keep my voice loud.

Member 2: It's not just you. It's something that as Asians, you need to take seriously.

[Looking around the room.] People have to speak up. Because we really don't. It's very nice to be very sweet and not bitchy and loud, but it's important that people hear what you are saying. [People quietly laugh and nod]

Another example of mocking and lecturing while discussing how Project CHARGE members interact with other coalitions and organizations that don't speak on behalf of Asian American communities, a member states:

One of the things we have to do is that we have to raise some questions that may not necessarily be polite. That's the first thing that Asians cannot do, is to be rude. We are taught from birth to be polite and listen to mommy and daddy and grandma and grandpa, and everybody else. And so sometimes we let people get away with things because we might think, oh that's not right, but if I say something maybe they will think I'm rude or impolite..."

The rest of the group remains quiet and some nod.

Joking can be seen in the following example where the group discusses a recent law for New York City agencies to collect accurate data, such as racial-ethnic group and language

spoke, on Asian American and other minority communities:

Member 1: What about staff requirements – if you are going to do intake and ask about language. And training and hiring. Because you can train, but you should also hire staff that are more appropriate and can speak the language.

Member 2: Yeah, it's all about training on this. I said, of course, to them... Look, take me as an example. If you look at just my name and didn't even look at me, you could just mark on the form that I'm Latina. But I'm not...

Member 1: (joking) All those years, and you aren't Latina??

Member 2: (laughing) Well, I could be – I mean we're mutts in the Philippines. Who knew...

Member 1: All these years...

(the group laughs)

In yet another instance, a visitor from another organization came to provide a training to the group. This visitor was herself Asian American, although representing a mainstream organization. Before the meeting started, the visitor remarked that she had met and remembered one of the Project CHARGE members at the table before. The Project CHARGE member then stated that she didn't recall the visitor and jokingly reminded the group of an Asian American stereotype: "I don't know... I didn't want to say that all civil rights women look alike, so..." These instances of mocking and joking serve to motivate and activate the group. During interviews, some members recall and identify moments of derogatory joking as notable in the group's ability to express its identity and motivate around a pan-ethnic identity. In an interview, a member notes that the joking is effective in bonding the group together.

Externally Directed. The activation and the politicization of the Asian American identity can also be seen in moments when Project CHARGE members frame their role and purpose in meeting with decision-makers, and representatives from mainstream organizations and those representing other coalitions. Much of the framing around the Asian American identity in these instances involves the use of a "one voice", or "unified voice" frame to describe Project CHARGE's role as being the voice for advocacy for the Asian American community.

Described by a member:

Advocacy... that's the main role from Project CHARGE, that I expect from Project CHARGE in reducing health disparities... we share and send out information in an email blast in Project CHARGE name to other communities – to the mainstream... people could know what's going on and CHARGE can be an influence to other communities or mainstream, somehow. It is helpful to relay the voice of the community to others.

Another member shares about Project CHARGE: "I think it's THE (emphasis on "the") voice for advocacy for Asian Americans around health issues. I don't think there's any other group that does this here." Similarly, another member states, "We can make one strong voice from Asian American CBOs or organizations. I don't think there are many Asian American coalitions in NYC, even if NYC is so diverse. This one, I'm glad that CHARGE has been around for 7 years and I hope that work continues." And yet another member speaks of the value of the group to them, "Unity is very important for me. When you speak for one issue in one voice, it's very strong." One member speaks directly of the activating aspect of speaking as one voice, "Like, yes! We are proud to be an Asian American coalition. I am here to voice out the needs of the Asian American community. It's motivating!"

In a debrief meeting of Project CHARGE after certain members participated in a State lobby day to discuss DACA and healthcare access and equity with decision-makers and elected officials, one member reflects:

It was a good experience. I love to deal with politicians – they sit there because they know we vote for them and we are the people so they have to listen... Will it happen, we don't know. So we'll see, because politics game... Are we going to be tricked like we were in the City? So, we'll see what happens... What are you going to do for my community? It's election year, and we need our unified voice to be heard! So we'll see...

Speaking about the unified Asian American using the unified or one “voice” frame is a critical shaping of the identity amongst group members, and constructs the Asian American identity as impactful and powerful for the community.

B. Asian American IDENTITY DECONSTRUCTION

In addition to moments of activation, there are very discernable moments of Asian American identity deconstruction that members of Project CHARGE and CACF staff facilitators value. I argue that as Gamson (1995) suggests, identity deconstruction (or destabilization as described by Gamson) can be strategic and a form of identity work that is valuable in politicizing and in fact activating the pan-ethnic identity. And as I will explain more in the following chapter, deconstruction of the pan-ethnic identity, whether strategic or not, is critical in maintaining the relevance of the pan-ethnic identity, and in supporting inclusivity and preventing the reproduction of social inequities and ethnic favoritism that often occurs in work with and on behalf of the Asian American community.

Most identity deconstruction observed occurs in moments internal to Project CHARGE, although similar to identity activation, those moments are both internally and externally directed. Some of the moments of identity deconstruction observed occur in coalition member interactions with those outside the coalition, but who are visiting the coalition to educate the group on their organization's work. Most of the moments of deconstruction observed are strategic. That is, they are intentionally discussed or welcomed in a space created specifically for them. It is important to note that moments of identity deconstruction that are not invited in the coalition do exist, and may not serve the same role as those that are strategic. Examples of both will be outlined below, with a focus on examples of strategic deconstruction.

Internally Directed Deconstruction. During interviews, most members of Project CHARGE who represent Asian ethnic community-based organizations describe, as their most important role as a coalition member, providing insight and education about their specific Asian ethnic communities' needs, as opposed to other Asian ethnic groups or the collective Asian American community as a whole. This "information-sharing" (as it is often called) about specific Asian ethnic communities and specific organizational experiences and grievances serves in fact to disaggregate, or to separate and pull apart, the pan-ethnic Asian American identity. It highlights individual ethnic communities and different struggles faced by these communities. Yet, this type of information sharing is commonplace in Project CHARGE coalition meetings. The deconstruction of the Asian American pan-ethnic identity is often strategic - invited and provided a space in discussion.

In moments of internally directed strategic deconstruction, the "Our Community" frame used by members shifts fluidly from describing the pan-ethnic Asian American identity to

describing a specific Asian ethnic community. As an example, in multiple meetings the impact of Islamophobia on Muslim community-members is discussed – specifically the impact on Arab and South Asian communities: “Our community... Muslims live in fear. I cry, I am scared for my kids – my daughter was called terrorist because she is wearing a hijab. People look at us different.” Similarly, members constantly bring up specific and unique needs and experiences of their respective communities. In another moment during the Project CHARGE strategic plan, a member speaks of their interest for Project CHARGE to tackle issues faced by the Southeast Asian community in the Bronx: “We would like to see a focus on mental health issues in API communities – specifically in our communities we look at trauma and DNA.” Another member discusses impacts of Japanese internment on the Japanese community and the conversations continue with other ethnic-specific community level information sharing.

In another moment of strategic identity deconstruction, when discussing Project CHARGE’s participation in an Asian American conference, one member reflects on the difficulties once again in representing the diverse Asian American community to the mainstream audience at the conference:

So, how can we, in the conference itself, bring panelists from every community – Arab American, Korean, Muslim, Asian, Japanese - because it is different cultures. What resources we have, what is working for you, what is not working for me. How can we bring all of us in one panel? Let’s discuss, let’s talk. Educate others and maybe they have ideas for us. A multi-cultural panel for seniors. From every agency in Project CHARGE. That would be great to have a speaker from each community. Because we need to *educate ourselves also and we also need to learn more*. This is a population that

is not being served 100%. Maybe it is more served in the Chinese community or in the Korean, but not in our community.

In other instances, strategic deconstruction can be seen through the coalition openly acknowledging and reflecting on the difficulties of representing the full Asian American community in its work. For example, at a moment of realization, one member sighs and reflects on the weight of representing a diverse pan-ethnic community during a coalition meeting, “Yeah, one of the toughest things... is that there are so many different ethnicities within Asian American. It is a lot of issues, yeah.” Along those lines, during a Project CHARGE strategic planning meeting, an item openly discussed is that of expanding membership to ensure better representation of Asian Americans, which is received with some level of skepticism:

Consultant: Do we have the right partners to help move on the issues? Do we want to open it up? Last time very specifically sat and discussed which groups to include. So, do we want to expand? And with whom?

Member 1: United Sikh Coalition wanted to join and asked about formal process. They reached out because they are involved in the larger navigator network and they are interested in the work of Project CHARGE.

Member 2: How representative are we? Do we touch all ethnicities? Do we want to include Pacific Islanders? We don't have reps for them.

Member 1: Where are they? Can we find them?

Member 3: Does the picnic group need another issue to get together besides a picnic?

Consultant: Usually food and dance are the best entry points sometimes – for better or for worse... So, are there other communities we should include?... Asian community orgs that we should outreach to but we just don't know how to get to them??

Member 3: We have some overlapping organization groups with other organizations. Two interested groups are also SAPNA and Aadhikar.

Consultant: How critical is it to bring in other groups? Do we need to expand? Are we open to considering, or is it that we are waiting for folks to approach us... Do we represent geographic and ethnic groups?

Member 4: Geographically and ethnically based – if we can have the broader picture, that's good. But it has to align with the work – some support the work but when it comes to being a part of this space they may not be.

Later in the meeting, it is decided that a few members will reach out to some organizations about becoming members of Project CHARGE. Expanding Project CHARGE membership to make sure the group is inclusive and representative of Asian ethnic group's voice is again brought up throughout the year in a number of moments during coalition meetings. Through the time of my field research, no new groups join.

Moments of Asian American identity deconstruction in Project CHARGE can also be non-strategic and not invited into the meeting space, thereby creating tensions among members and organizations. One such instance, termed as "callous" by a witness, is recalled and described similarly by three members of the coalition when asked during interviews to describe moments of tension amongst Project CHARGE members (also an event explained in an earlier chapter). In the described event, one member made a disparaging comment, expressing their

disapproval about the New York City public school system adopting Eid as a holiday before adopting Lunar New Year. In this moment, the ethnic/religious favoritism of a member are exposed and directed towards another member. As mentioned by one member, “Some communities are a little more – they have blinders on – and they aren’t aware that there are needs of other community members who are often not engaged in the dialogue.” This type of deconstruction can be particularly harmful in building a unified Asian American identity, as it highlights internal competitions and favoritism, and can result in one member othering and isolating another.

Externally directed Deconstruction. Moments of strategic identity deconstruction can also be seen as externally directed to those outside of Project CHARGE. These externally directed moments usually focus on educating the mainstream or non-Asian American communities about the diversity within the Asian American community. In Project CHARGE, externally directed strategic deconstruction addresses topics of language access and data disaggregation, or the collection of racial/ethnic specific and language-specific data to represent the various communities comprising the Asian American pan-ethnic identity.

In one meeting, a member shares the work on data disaggregation within the Asian American community, and advocating for a bill in New York City,

I think in the course of conversations, even though our bill was veto-proof, Councilmember Dromm got calls from other communities who wanted to be included. As you know, Arab American wasn’t included and they have always been supportive of 251... and Indo-Caribbean, Black, and Latino communities called... So, I don’t want to say it’s a compromise but this is what they decided to do. Instead of

having a breakdown of the 19 different APA categories, they decided to break out the top 30 ethnic groups in the City based on the US Census in New York City. So, they take the top groups from the census, and the top 30 languages. So, when it shook out, we were able to get the Arabic language added – which is what we were supporting. Unfortunately, it did not include some of the smaller emerging South Asian languages. So, Nepali is not included, neither is Khmer and Cambodian. I think we had Sri Lankan, I can't remember. There's no PI groups, some of the smaller groups because those just don't bubble up with the top 30. We had a follow-up meeting... We voiced that this doesn't feel like a huge victory at the end of the day, because we really had this bill to fight for the small emerging APA communities. Because we know that the same large groups – they are going to make it. If you take the larger groups, we know they are going to make it – like we know that we are going to get Chinese and Korean, no matter what. And we told them, we don't really sense that this is that much more expansive.

Another moment of strategic deconstruction is observed during a coalition meeting when a staff of a non-member/non-Asian American organization visited to describe a project around health coverage for undocumented immigrants. During that meeting, a member of Project CHARGE has an exchange, educating the external staff representative on the diverse language needs of the Asian American community and possible strategies to address language needs:

Project CHARGE Member: You know, there's been so much division within the City on so many issues that this would be a really good place to have as much language access

emphasis, and as much families and people who have been left out to be included at the table at the outset so it could be an example of “let’s work together on this”.

External Staff Member: Yeah, that’s right and important – we need to do a good job of planning and creating language access at meetings and things. We need to think about how to do that well.

CHARGE Member: You know, just a few words – translation, materials – those kinds of things would be very meaningful. And you folks don’t do it.

External Staff: Yeah, well, we do speak Spanish, but that is one language.

CHARGE Member: Yeah, that’s one of the problems – everything gets focused on Spanish and every other language – Asian languages are so diverse. You can’t even settle on one dialect for South Asian.

External Staff Member: So, would a meaningful start to be to translate a one-pager in 8-9 languages.

CHARGE Member: And ask, would you be willing to help us get more dialects... so that if you decide to do, say, Mandarin, that you have a footnote that we are aware that this only covers one dialect and would you have access to help us or provide a resource to us...

External Staff Member: That’s great.

Whether internally or externally directed, strategic deconstruction of the Asian American pan-ethnic identity is utilized in moments of coalition-building, such as in moments discussing representation, data disaggregation, and in educating members on ethnic-specific needs and concerns. As a form of identity work, there is ample space and time allotted, as well

as weight given to moments of deconstructing the pan-ethnic Asian American identity. In the next chapter, I discuss the relevance to social work of my conceptualization of identity work as seen in Project CHARGE. I discuss why both deconstruction and activation may be necessary for successful and social work value-driven coalition-building across diverse communities, as evidenced through Project CHARGE.

CHAPTER 7: RELEVANCE TO SOCIAL WORK AND QUESTIONS FOR FUTURE STUDY

Asian American coalition-building, created around a complex and socially-constructed pan-ethnic racial/ethnic category, has been critical to the advancement of multiple communities of color. It is through pan-ethnic coalition-building that many Asian American communities have been able to fight for their needs and rights in this country, as well as to ally with other communities of color in efforts to promote equity for all peoples of color (Okamoto, 2010 & 2006; Junn and Masuoka, 2008; Lien et al, 2004; Geron et al, 2001; Epiritu, 1993).

When asked about pan-ethnic coalition-building and advocacy work, a CACF staff facilitator of Project CHARGE states:

I think it's a necessity to do this work pan-ethnically. It's really hard to push an agenda if its ethnic-based or from an individual organization. Only time that works is when there is a crisis – for example, Adhikaar addressing the Nepali earthquake. But it is really difficult to push any equity agenda without pan-Asian organizing.

In this chapter, I discuss the relevance of this study, focusing on identity work and Asian American organizational coalition-building, to social work and specifically to organizational collaboration and coalition-building. I also suggest questions for future study.

A. Asian American Identity Politicized -- to what end?

It is clear that the role of the politicized collective Asian American identity continues to be explored within the community by leaders of organizations as well as researchers. In a recent Asian American Community Development Conference organized by Asian Americans for Equality in New York City in October of 2017, a session topic included “Asian American Community Leadership Across Sectors and Issues,” to look at the state of organizational

coalitions and collaborations across Asian American organizations in New York City. Yet another conference in May of 2017, organized by CUNY's Asian American/Asian Research Institute was titled, "Building Coalitions & Coalescing a Pan/Asian/Pacific/American Identity" and directly explored the history and complexities of the Asian American identity and activism. Pan-ethnic mobilizing towards equity, with a special emphasis on those most disenfranchised and most in need, remains relevant and critical in today's society, and is a topic of interest for scholars in various fields of social work, public policy, urban planning, education, and more.

In the past fifteen or so years, many Asian American organizations and coalitions have been pushing for disaggregated data on Asian American communities. This strategic deconstruction of the pan-ethnic identity strives to recognize, count, and validate those ethnic groups that struggle most in this country with issues of poverty, immigration, poor housing, and lack of language access to needed services, and that have been the most marginalized and disenfranchised groups among Asian Americans, such as some South and Southeast Asian ethnic communities (Bangladeshi, Pakistani, Thai, Vietnamese, Cambodian, Nepali, and others). On October 31, 2016, New York City Mayor Bill DeBlasio signed into law a bill that would require New York City government agencies to collect information on language spoken, ancestry, ethnic origin, multiracial identity, gender identity, and sexual orientation¹⁸. This law began years ago with the work of the Coalition for Asian American Children and Families (CACF) on Asian American data disaggregation and with a campaign entitled, "Invisible No More." Along with community partners and City Council members, CACF worked on a New York City bill

¹⁸ https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/data-disaggregation-bills-passed-in-new-york-city-a_us_581cbc24e4b0334571e09a97

to disaggregate data on Asian Americans, in order to better count and represent the diverse needs of various smaller ethnic groups within the broader pan-ethnic category. It eventually grew into a larger law to disaggregate data for various ethnic and immigrant populations and not just Asian Americans, including 30 of the top racial/ethnic groups in New York City (according to the Census and Department of Education data), as well as multiple languages spoken and gender and sexual identities. Laws on the disaggregation of data on Asian Americans have been passed in the States of Rhode Island, Minnesota, and California¹⁹. A bill on disaggregating data for Asian American communities has been proposed in Massachusetts and is supported by a large organizational coalition comprised of many Asian American organizations²⁰. A similar bill has passed in the New York State Assembly²¹ and will be pushed in the Senate and with the Governor.

But recent history has also shown another strain of the politicized Asian American community across the country that has risen up in response to movement for disaggregated data. A growing number of grassroots conservative groups – mainly comprised of people from Chinese communities across the country – are emerging to fight to maintain aggregate data on Asian Americans, calling disaggregation racist, and suggesting that it is wrong to use ethnic data for admissions to schools or jobs^{22,23}. These groups argue against affirmative action policies

¹⁹ <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/asian-america/california-governor-signs-bill-disaggregate-asian-american-health-data-n655361>

²⁰ <http://sampan.org/2018/01/coalition-of-more-than-50-multiracial-organizations-advocates-for-asian-american-data-disaggregation-at-house-bill-3361-hearing/>

²¹ <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/asian-america/bill-disaggregate-asian-american-pacific-islander-data-passes-new-york-n775556>

²² <https://www.npr.org/2017/08/05/541844705/protests-against-the-push-to-disaggregate-asian-american-data>

²³ <http://newbostonpost.com/2018/02/06/asian-american-data-collection-proposal-roils-massachusetts-residents/>

stating that they unfairly disadvantage Asian American students, which some have called an “Asian Tax”²⁴.

These Asian American organizations seem to be locally focused and loosely connected around the country, but have gained some political power under the Trump administration. They intend to keep many Asian ethnic communities and their struggles and needs for resources and services invisible. This can replicate dominant and harmful stereotypes of Asian Americans as the model minority, as well as promote ethnic favoritism among Asian American groups. As previously mentioned, studies have shown that organizations claiming to be Asian American can serve to replicate gender-norms, ethnic favoritism, and other discriminatory patterns in the larger society (Otis, 2000; Ward, 2008).

Growing instances of the use of the pan-ethnic collective identity to fight against efforts towards equity and social justice, and to perpetuate oppressive systems and structures serves as a warning to those fighting for equity for communities of color. It underscores: 1) the need to understand how the Asian American collective identity is used in organizations and organizing (processes and dynamics), and 2) the need for organizations to conscientiously work to ensure, and not assume, that the pan-ethnic Asian American identity is deployed in ways that promote equity and social justice. Ethnic studies scholar and activist Glenn Omatsu (2003) discusses the perceptions of the Asian American community and Asian American activism over four decades and in the context of civil rights movements in communities of color. He states that Asian American activists are tasked to redefine the Asian American experience. Omatsu’s

²⁴ <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/08/02/us/affirmative-action-battle-has-a-new-focus-asian-americans.html>

(2003) words apply not only to Asian American activism in relation to other communities of color, but also in relation to the diversity within the Asian American community:

Will we fight only for ourselves, or will we embrace the concerns of all oppressed peoples? Will we overcome our own oppression and help create a new society, or will we become a new exploiter in the present American hierarchy of inequality? Will we define our goal of empowerment solely in terms of individual advancement for a few, or as the collective liberation for all peoples?" (p. 160)

B. Asian American Identity Work

As has been discussed in previous chapters, the Asian American collective identity is relevant and important to Project CHARGE members. It is a defining construct for Project CHARGE as a coalition. It serves as a factor that may sustain the group and significantly shapes its dialogue and agenda. I argue that Identity work in the forms of both activation and strategic deconstruction of the Asian American identity are critical processes that bring together and maintain the cohesiveness, relevance, and strength of Project CHARGE - a pan-ethnic organizational coalition. Equally critical and speaking to points laid out above, I argue that identity work, especially strategic deconstruction, is necessary to ensure that the pan-ethnic identity is framed and deployed in a way that does not replicate harmful stereotypes, ethnic favoritism, and ultimately the continued marginalization of Asian ethnic groups.

Identity work as discussed in the forms of activation can serve to build trust among members and to motivate members to collaborate and sustain the coalition. As explained, the use of "our community" and "one voice" frames serves to reinforce and politicize the Asian American collective identity. Further, the pointed joking, educating

and lecturing about Asian American stereotypes serves to heighten boundaries between the Asian American community and the mainstream or other non-Asian American communities.

For Project CHARGE, identity work in the form of strategic deconstruction also helps politicize the Asian American identity. Using strategically deconstructive processes such as promoting disaggregation of data, encouraging the voice of individual ethnic community struggle, and questioning the inclusivity of the Asian American community within the coalition, Project CHARGE defines how the Asian American identity is politicized. These processes actively counter the forces that tend to exclude and marginalize – to make invisible - various communities of color, and prevent the reinforcement and replication of dominant (and oppressive) ideologies that can exist in pan-ethnic organizations.

As seen through the incident of one member disparaging the City's choice to honor Eid in schools, biases exist both within and about the Asian American community. A member remembers the incident.

It surfaced a lot of unspoken conflict within the Asian American community of who - which community - is more powerful, who has more clout, who are the ones who have a voice, who holds leadership positions, key leadership positions who make the decisions. It's totally unspoken in Asian American coalitions and initiatives. Who are the people in key leadership positions, deciding on certain things. And if it's not your orientation towards inclusion and to represent smaller communities, that's where it gets difficult and that's when these things might surface, like how come that group got this and we didn't, or a pitting against one another.

After the Chinese member organization made the comment questioning the City's decision to honor Eid and not Lunar New Year, the CACF staff facilitator states that she took the opportunity to explain how Eid is important to many Asian Americans and is also a win for the Asian American community.

Through strategic deconstruction processes of sharing and exploring specific ethnic community dynamics, concerns, and strengths, members of Project CHARGE are educated and supported by each other. These processes may help to prevent the reinforcement of harmful stereotypes and societal inequities that persist within and about the Asian American community.

Strategic deconstruction of the identity can also allow for Project CHARGE's work to maintain relevance to each organizational member by intentionally creating a space for community-specific concerns to shape the coalition's work. Encouraging this type of ethnic-specific dialogue among members potentially allows the work of a pan-ethnic coalition to continue to adapt to the changing and varied needs within a diverse community.

Okamoto (2010) shows that resource scarcity and competition among Asian ethnic organizations suppresses cross-ethnic collaborations and that in times of limited resources, ethnic groups choose to turn inward and focus on their own issues. As detailed in Chapter 5, Project CHARGE has existed for a number of years in a resource-scarce environment, faced by 1) the coalition itself, 2) the coordinating organization (the Coalition for Asian American Children and Families), and 3) the member organizations. The lack of resources could have led to the disbanding of the coalition, but Project CHARGE continues and is considered important and valuable to the member organizations that comprise it. Of course, as detailed in Chapter 5,

it is clear that the focus of the coalition itself turned away from more radical advocacy work around health equity and towards the funding of services. I argue that the identity work engaged in by the coalition – both in activation and strategic deconstruction of the Asian American identity - may also be a factor countering the effects of resource scarcity, which would pull the coalition apart.

On the surface, moves to deconstruct the pan-ethnic identity would seem to be an effort in undermining or weakening the collective identity and in working opposite of activation (and politicization) of the collective identity. But in fact, strategic deconstruction as a form of identity work may in fact help to strengthen Asian American organizational coalition-building. As shown through the Asian American groups fighting against data disaggregation, the Asian American identity, and specifically its deconstruction, is being challenged. As Omatsu ponders, it again seems to be a critical time for activists to redefine the Asian American experience through thoughtful processes.

C. Implications for Social Work

In a seminal social work study on coalitions and coalition-building, Mizrahi and Rosenthal (2001) define organizational coalitions as long-term collaborations that aim to build collective power of a community, and that can be classified as social movement organizations. The authors argue for the need for social worker administrators to be informed about the complexities of coalitions, in order to be effective leaders of coalitions. Perrault et al (2011) argue “Collaboration Practice” is critical in social work as a professional requirement. They highlight the values and skills among social workers as well-suited to facilitating organizational

collaborations. Social workers can and should grow their involvement as leaders in community- and social justice-focused coalitions.

According to the National Association of Social Workers' (NASW) Code of Ethics²⁵, the mission and values of social work include the following: "Social workers are sensitive to cultural and ethnic diversity and strive to end discrimination, oppression, poverty, and other forms of social injustice." Additionally, the NASW Code states, "Social workers also seek to promote the responsiveness of organizations, communities, and other social institutions to individuals' needs and social problems."

This study argues that inter-organizational collaborations, such as coalitions, may not inherently embrace core social work values. Further, there may be various processes and necessary tensions (i.e. identity work) that, if earnestly engaged in by coalitions involving diverse organizations, might help to ensure that collaborations espouse social work values. And in order to be value-driven leaders, social workers must be equipped with knowledge around a growing diversity of organizational coalitions, many formed at least in part based on collective identities (for example, women's groups, LGBTQ groups, and ethnic groups).

Therefore, as called for by Mizrahi and Rosenthal (2001), this study and others similar to it can and should inform social work instruction in the concentrations that aim to develop leaders in organizations and communities, such as administration and management, community organizing, and generalist practice and programming. Additionally, this study can respond to the call for more scholarship that further clarifies how social workers define and

²⁵ <https://www.socialworkers.org/About/Ethics/Code-of-Ethics/Code-of-Ethics-English>

conceptualize leadership roles in coalitions and other inter-organizational collaboratives (Lawler, 2007).

In summary, this study of the processes of identity work in pan-ethnic coalition-building can be useful in progressing social work research and dialogue, as well as community-based practice that calls for coalition-building across diverse human service and nonprofit organizations. Project CHARGE is only one example of a collaboration of Asian American organizations attempting to come together to fight for larger changes in systems and policies to promote health equity for Asian American communities. Lessons learned about identity work, as seen in Project CHARGE, can inform future study and work of pan-ethnic organizational coalitions. It could also inform the study and work of other coalitions that are centered around complex collective identities, for example Black Lives Matter and the Women's March, which aim to represent a diverse array of identities.

D. Questions for Future Study

Many questions are opened up through this study into Project CHARGE as a pan-ethnic coalition and the identity work in which the coalition is engaged. First, as identified by Gazley and Guo (2015), organizational theories dominate the study of inter-organizational collaboration. This study, pulling from identity and social movement literature, provides some insight on the application of collective identity theories – specifically identity work - at an organizational level to study organizational coalition-building. There are potentially other ways to apply collective identity theories in this context.

A question to explore further is the variety of collective identities – outside ethnic identities – at play in the coalition, and various processes surrounding those identities. At least

one Project CHARGE member discussed at length how she feels closer to the group because the majority of members are women of color. Her identification as a woman of color and how that played a role in her or others' commitments to Project CHARGE, or how those identities may have also shaped Project CHARGE, was not explored. Relatedly, this research leads to questions dealing with the layered nature of identities - person in organization in coalition in community. For example, there are questions to ask about the interaction of an organizational member representative's individual collective identities and their interactions with organizational identities and coalition identities. This study is not able to look at the layers of identities, including individual collective identities, and how they might play a role in the processes, structures and sustainability of the coalition.

It would also be interesting to explore further the presumably multiple additional frames and dynamics of identity activation and deconstruction within the context of an organizational coalitions built around a collective identity, possibly even continuing the use of discursive moments as a unit of analysis. Additionally, and also within the same context, it would be important to identify and explore components of identity work other than activation and deconstruction, and how those components might also impact coalition-building.

In terms of the Asian American collective identity itself, more exploration is warranted about its use by organizations and among organizations in collaborating and building coalitions. The politicization of the identity is being increasingly explored and questioned, especially in the context of voting and civic participation, but there remains relatively little research on pan-ethnic identities, organizations, and social movements today.

Many within the community question how long the Asian American collective identity can remain a resource to organizations, to coalition-building, and to movements for equity and justice. In time and with shifting contexts, the relevance of the pan-ethnic identity in the fight for equity for communities of color might strengthen or fade. As a CACF staff facilitator states:

I can see in the future – why does our organization need to be under a pan-Asian coalition if we have the population size. Why would we need to be under a larger umbrella? I can imagine that in the future that might... as communities get bigger and grow in their power, what's the need for pan-Asian work. But right now, it's kind of a necessity.

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APPENDIX A: Project CHARGE & CACF Organizational and Individual Staff Representative Participant Characteristics

Organization Name	Org: # Staff (approx)	Org: Budget (approx)	Org: Type of work	Org: Length in Project CHARGE (years)	Individual Staff Rep: Gender	Ind. Rep.: Age	Ind. Rep.: Ethnicity	Ind. Rep.: Generation (1st, 2nd, etc.)	1st, years in U.S.	Ind. Rep.: Ed. level	Ind. Rep.: Degree received
Child Center of NY, Asian Outreach Clinic	900	\$20M+	Direct Services	7	F	42	Asian Indian	1 st	16	Masters	Social Work
Japanese American Association	4	\$600K	Direct Services	7	F	81	Japanese American	2nd and 3rd	n/a	Undergraduate	Bachelors
Henry Street Settlement	950-1000	\$20M+	Direct Services	7	M	44	Taiwanese	1 st	19	Masters	Counseling Psychology
Korean Community Services of Metropolitan NY	40-50	\$3M	Direct Services	7	F	33	Korean American; Asian American	1 st	10	Masters	Social Work
NYU Center for the Study of Asian American Health	22	\$750K (direct)	Research, Training, Health services	7	F	33	Asian Indian	2nd	n/a	Masters	Public Health
Arab American Family Service Center	45	\$3M	Direct Services	3	F	56	Arab American	1 st	35	Associates Degree	Social Work
South Asian Council for Social Services	9	\$500K	Direct Services	4	M	32	Pakistani	1 st	4	Masters	
Chinese American Planning Council	1000	\$20M+	Direct Services	7	F	50	Chinese	2nd Migration	30	Masters	Social Work
Hunter University	N/A	\$20M+		7	M	49	Asian race; Korean ethnicity	2nd	n/a	PhD	Urban Planning
Charles B. Wang Health Center	500	\$20M+	Direct/Health Services, Research	7	F	28	Filipina/Filipina American	2nd	n/a	Masters	Education

Organization Name	Org: # Staff (approx)	Org: Budget (approx)	Org: Type of work	Org: Length in Project CHARGE (years)	Individual Staff Rep: Gender	Ind. Rep.: Age	Ind. Rep.: Ethnicity	Ind. Rep.: Generation (1st, 2nd, etc.)	1st, years in U.S.	Ind. Rep.: Ed. level	Ind. Rep.: Degree received
Memorial Sloan Kettering: Immigrant Health and Cancer Disparity Center	30	\$20M+	Research, Health Services	7	F	29	Bangladeshi/Bengali	1 st	14	Masters	Public Health
Coalition for Asian American Children and Families (CACF)	7	\$2M	Policy Advocacy, Research, Direct Services	7	M	27	Filipino	2 nd	n/a	Undergraduate	
CACF	7	\$2M	Policy Advocacy, Research, Direct Services	7	F	38	Filipina	1.5	28	Masters	Public Health
CACF	7	\$2M	Policy Advocacy, Research, Direct Services	7	F	44	South Asian	1 st	40	Masters	Public Health
CACF	7	\$2M	Policy Advocacy, Research, Direct Services	7	F	Not answered	Chinese	1 st	30+	Masters	Professional Studies

APPENDIX B: Participant Interview Guide

Statement of Research: This study explores strategies and tactics of coalition-building across diverse non-profit organizations, and various factors affecting organizational coalition-building. The findings of the study may help inform future organizational coalition-building efforts.

Demographics and Introductory Information

Name:

Gender:

Age:

Ethnicity or ethnic affiliation (or race, if ethnicity is not answerable or applicable):

Generation Status (1st, 2nd, etc.):

If 1st, years in the U.S.:

Educational Level:

Degree(s) received:

Briefly describe your professional background (and how long have you been working in your field?):

Your organizations name:

Your position in organization:

How long have you been with your organization?

How long have you been in your current position?

How long have you been involved with Project CHARGE while at this organization?

Were you involved with Project CHARGE in any other capacity in the past? Y N

If so, please explain:

If member agency staff, ask the following:

How many staff (individuals, not necessarily FTE) does your organization employ (approximately)?

What is your organization's budget (approximately)?

What type of work does your organization engage in (check all that apply):

- Policy/Advocacy Research Direct Services Grant-making
 Community organizing Other: _____

Who do you serve or who are the beneficiaries of your organization's work?

How long has your organization been a member of CACF (if known)?

How long has your organization been involved with Project CHARGE (if known)?

Is your organization involved in other coalitions? If so, please name as many of them as possible:

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR ALL PARTICIPANTS

[INFORM PARTICIPANT AND TURN ON AUDIO RECORDER]

- 1) Briefly, how would you describe the type of organization CACF is?
Probes: What is its function? Purpose? How do you see it meeting its purpose?
- 2) Tell me about your work or role with Project CHARGE.
Probes: Describe your involvement with Project CHARGE; What is your role in Project CHARGE; What type of work do you do with Project CHARGE
- 3) (For member organizations only) What motivated your organization to join Project CHARGE, and/or Why does your organization stay involved with Project CHARGE?
- 4) What does coalition-building mean to [your organization]?
Probe: What do you think are some major strategies involved in coalition-building that are used in Project CHARGE? How about strategies used by other coalitions you are familiar with?
Further probe: What strategies (used in Project CHARGE coalition-building) are effective? Not effective?
- 5) In your work experience, what are some of the main factors that affect coalition-building?
 - Break this question down by talking through the (pre-identified) main strategies/stages of coalition-building and elicit factors that might be influential in different stages.
 - Explore factors that may hinder coalition-building

4a) If and when identity is mentioned while discussing coalition-building, 1) note what aspect of coalition-building is being discussed; and 2) clarify the meaning of the specific identity mentioned.
Probe further:

 - Why is this identity important?
 - How is this identity used or acted upon in coalition-building? (goals for use?)
 - How has this identity been useful or not useful in coalition-building across organizations?
 - Can you provide examples?

4b) If pan-ethnic identity is not brought up, bring it up towards the end of the interview and explore what the participant thinks about the panethnicity and coalition-building (must be clearly noted that participant only brought up pan-ethnicity with prompting).

APPENDIX C: Interview Participant Informed Consent Form

Consent Form to Participate in a Research Study

Please read this consent form carefully and ask as many questions as you like before you decide whether you want to participate in this research study. You are free to ask questions at any time before, during, or after your participation in this research.

1. Title of research study and general information

Study title: Organizational Coalition-Building: a discursive case study

Study number: IRB-[XXX]

2. Researchers' contact information

Principal Investigator: Dr. Barbara Simon, Associate Professor, Columbia University School of Social Work

Phone Number/Email: 212-851-2248; bls1@columbia.edu

Co-Investigator/Doctoral Student: Anita Gundanna, MSW, Doctoral Student, Columbia University School of Social Work

Phone Number/Email: 212-729-4273; ag631@columbia.edu

3. What information is on this form?

We are asking you to take part in a research study. This form explains why we are doing this study and what you will be asked to do if you choose to be in this study. It also describes the way we would like to use and share information about you.

Please take the time to read through this form. We will also talk to you about taking part in this research study. You should ask us any questions you have about this form and about this research study.

You do not have to participate if you don't want to.

4. Why is this study being done?

We are doing this research study to learn more about strategies of organizational coalition-building and various factors affecting coalition-building across diverse organizations. We are asking you to take part in this study because you are part of Project CHARGE, which is the coalition we are focusing on for this case study. It is our hope that this study can help inform organizational coalition-building efforts across diverse non-profit organizations and add to the literature in this area.

APPENDIX D: Organizational Consent Form (CACF/Project CHARGE)

May 28, 2014

Anita Gundanna
Doctoral Candidate
Columbia School of Social Work
44 Butler Place, 2B
Brooklyn, NY 11238

Jessica Lee
Interim Executive Director
Coalition for Asian American Children and Families
50 Broad Street, 18th Floor
NY, NY 10004

Dear Jessica -

As you know, I am a doctoral candidate at Columbia University School of Social Work (CUSSW) under the supervision of Dr. Barbara Simon, Associate Professor of Social Work. I will be conducting my dissertation research on how the Asian American panethnic identity is used in social movement organizational coalition-building, and the various factors that might facilitate or hinder the use of panethnicity.

I am writing to ask your permission to conduct my study of these phenomena at the Coalition for Asian American Children and Families (CACF). Specifically, in looking at identity use, I intend to study 1) processes and structures of CACF as an organization; 2) dynamics/discourse with and among various coalition member organizations; and 3) connections between the coalition and the larger social/political/cultural environment. Ultimately, I hope this research will help CACF and organizations like CACF to understand better the role that the Asian American identity plays in organizational coalition-building and how to best deploy identity in progressing advocacy work on behalf of the community.

If CACF agrees to participate in this research, I will conduct interviews with staff (estimated to be about 1-2 hours each); conduct observations of various organizational processes, especially at meetings, events, hearing, and other groups relevant to the dynamics of panethnicity and coalition-building; and review website content, various documents, reports, and other organizational texts that are available to me. I plan on spending between 6 -12 months conducting my research in the field and hope to begin in October, 2014. In addition to my work at CACF, I hope to be able to interview staff representatives of a number of coalition member organizations - representative of various Asian ethnic communities and organizational sizes - who are also willing to give their consent to participate in this study.

The name of your organization and all individual participants will be kept completely confidential, unless you (and they) explicitly give permission for identities to be revealed. Of course, you or any of the staff at CACF are under no obligation to participate in this study.

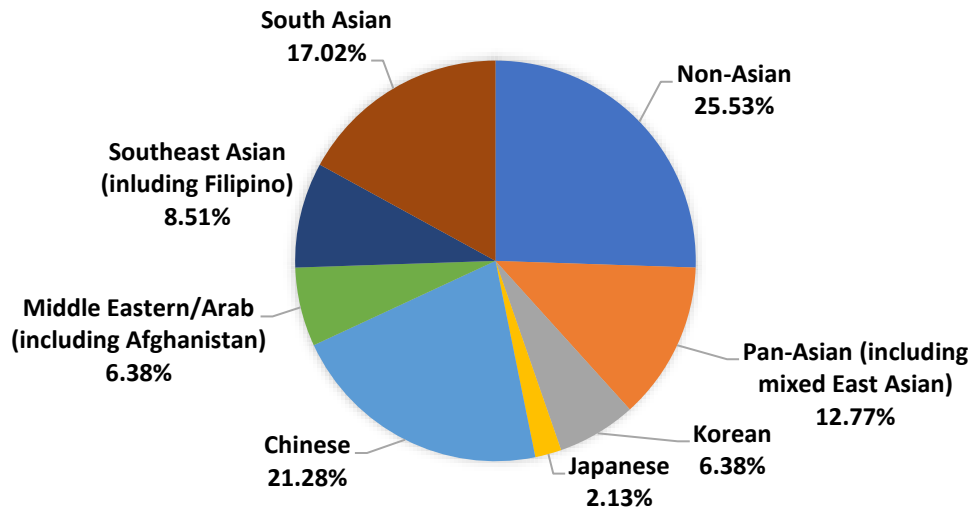
I plan to share with you and all CACF staff more detailed information about my research methodology (by August/September, 2014), including the proposed interview structure. In addition to transparency about my research methods, I will gladly accept any and all feedback from CACF staff on the methods I propose. I plan to share my results intermittently with staff and before finalizing my analysis, of course adhering to strict rules around confidentiality, in order to allow for any feedback and/or participation.

APPENDIX E: Coalition for Asian American Children and Families (CACF) Member Org Characteristics
 (Data from internet searches conducted between June 1-13, 2014)

CACF MEMBER ORG. ASIAN ETHNIC FOCUS

(TAKEN FROM ORG WEBSITE: MISSION, VISION, NAME*)

TOTAL ORGS = 47



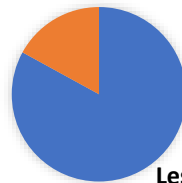
CACF MEMBER ORGANIZATION BUDGET SIZE

(ACCORDING TO LATEST DATA AVAILABLE ON GUIDESTAR.ORG*)

TOTAL ORGS = 47

More than \$5M

17.02%



Less than \$5M

82.98%

CACF MEMBER ORG FUNCTION

TOTAL ORGS = 47

