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“Undocumented and Citizen Students Unite”: Building a Cross-Status Coalition through Shared Ideology

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Social movement coalitions present unique opportunities and challenges for collective action as they bring together organizations, movements, and individuals who hold diverse interests and social positions. The literature suggests that collective identity and shared ideology both offer opportunities for bridging these differences, but few have addressed their relative utility. Drawing on a case study of a university-based coalition of undocumented and citizen students working to build support for the federal DREAM Act, I find that a social justice ideology was used to facilitate fast-paced recruitment, create simplified participation guidelines based on legal status, and allow for the strategic renegotiation of participation. I argue that building a cross-status coalition through a shared ideology has two key advantages: (1) it allows for fast-paced coalition formation and (2) it promotes the mobilization and commitment of organizations and individuals who occupy different identities and social locations. Additionally, I suggest that conflict among members can be best negotiated through the development of discursive and interactive spaces that allow individuals to engage across their different social locations. Keywords: social movements; coalitions; ideology; immigrant rights; undocumented youth.

Social movement coalitions can be thought of as cooperating organizations where each member organization maintains its own operating structures, goals, and ideologies (Van Dyke and McCammon 2010a). As a result, coalitions present unique challenges to collective action as they bring together individuals, organizations, and movements that have diverse interests and social positions (Beamish and Luebbers 2009; Bystydzienski and Schacht 2001; Van Dyke and McCammon 2010b). Yet, they are a crucial means of harnessing resources and bringing together various communities to reach an objective (Barvosa-Carter 2001; Berry 1997). To date, the complexity of coalition formation has largely been explained through the development of collective identities and, to a lesser extent, ideology (Cornfield and McCammon 2010; Kurtz 2002; Pulido 1996; Van Dyke and McCammon 2010a). However, few have assessed the relative utility of collective identity or ideology for quickly and successfully building a coalition space that is occupied by diversely identified individuals. Further, few discuss the day-to-day negotiations within these coalition spaces (McCorkel and Rodriquez 2009).

To address this, I explore the micro dynamics of a cross-status coalition, where individuals from different social locations work across a specific line of privilege. I conducted a case study of the DREAM Coalition¹ where undocumented and citizen members worked across differences in legal status to fight for the federal DREAM Act, which would provide a segment of the undocumented youth population with a pathway to legalize their immigration status. Rather than assess

1. This and all the other names of individuals and organizations have been changed to protect confidentiality.

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goal attainment (or lack thereof),² I explore the successful development and negotiation of this cross-status coalition. Drawing on ten months of participant observations and 31 in-depth interviews with Coalition members, I argue that focusing on shared ideology, rather than collective identity, allows for the quick formation of coalitions and promotes cooperation among individuals who occupy different identities and social locations. Although individuals' legal status identities were superficially employed to facilitate recruitment and participation, members effectively navigated potential conflict by drawing on shared ideologies to structure their participation and actively negotiate their roles. This suggests that shared ideology may be useful for building a coalition when there is no obvious collective identity to develop or few resources for developing one.

In the sections that follow, I address how the DREAM Coalition was built as well as how members negotiated their participation given their differing legal statuses. First, I explore individuals' reasons for joining the DREAM Coalition and find that shared ideologies facilitate both organizational and individual participation in a cross-status coalition. I then examine how ideologies about power and privilege were transformed into legal status-based roles in order to facilitate participation. Finally, I discuss how relying upon the shared ideology, rather than the prescribed identity-based roles, helped individuals effectively navigate conflict. Drawing on examples of two prominent types of conflict, I demonstrate that ideologies need to be openly developed and maintained within the coalition space. I conclude with a discussion of the significance of ideology for successfully building cross-status coalitions that can respond to political opportunities and threats in a timely manner.

Negotiating Coalition Development: Collective Identity and Shared Ideology

Scholars have spent a significant amount of time investigating how coalitions foster collective action across organizational, movement, and social boundaries. To facilitate goal attainment, coalitions have been built between organizations within the same social movement as well as across movements (see Adam 1995; Beamish and Luebbbers 2009; Gilmore 2008; McAdam 1982; Meyer and Whittier 1994; Morris 1984; Obach 2004; Roth 2010). In addition to bridging organizational and/or movement differences, individuals may also be working across different social locations, including race, class, or gender (see McCorkel and Rodriguez 2009; Pulido 1996; Richards 2004; Rose 2000; Schacht and Ewing 2001). This creates unique challenges as groups work toward a common goal while maintaining their various individual and organizational identities and bridging these differences.

Identity can be conceived as any social category that distinguishes membership; it often leads to a sense of self-identification and can have consequences for life outcomes (Bedolla 2007; Fearon 1999). Individuals occupy multiple social categories, or identities, which intersect in order to determine their social location and the rights, privileges, and powers that they can access (Collins 2000; Crenshaw 1991; hooks 2000). In this particular case, I use identity to refer to two particularly salient categories—legal status and race/ethnicity.

Individuals' multiple, intersecting identities can manifest themselves as competing loyalties that have to be reconciled in order to produce effective collective action (Beckwith 1998; Kurtz 2002; Oegema and Klardermans 1994; Richards 2004). This requires groups with different levels of privilege to come together and confront stereotypes about one another's understanding, power, and authenticity (Bedolla 2007; Quintero 2001). Additionally, groups might have differing approaches to problem solving, decision making, communicating, and/or taking action; these ideological differences may disrupt coalition development (Barvosa-Carter 2001). Overall, the

2. At the time of publication, the DREAM Act has not passed.

literature suggests that collective identity and shared ideology both offer opportunities for bridging individual identities and differences in cross-status coalitions.

Collective Identity

Most of the literature on coalitions focuses on the role of collective identity, which is defined as “an individual’s cognitive, moral, and emotional connection with a broader community . . . a perception of shared status or relation” (Polletta and Jasper 2001:285). Individual identities inform collective ones as participants tie one of their individual identities to the collective identity (Huddy 2001; Snow and McAdam 2000; Stryker 2000). Thus, building cross-status coalitions requires an open dialogue between individuals so that they can build connections, develop a collective identity, and learn to empathize and respect one another (Lyons 2001; Yuval-Davis 1997). This open dialogue has been found to occur in two ways: during coalition formation and through interactions within coalition spaces.

Open dialogue can take place during the initial development of a coalition. Jill M. Bystydzienski and Steven P. Schacht (2001) draw on multiple case studies to set forth a three-part framework for open dialogue: (1) recognize and discuss differences and identities, (2) assess how privileges from various social locations affect relationships within the coalition, and (3) search for commonalities and accept differences. This requires a significant amount of upfront discussion as leaders attempt to set up guiding principles that foster effective participation and trust. In some cases this requires months of meetings and in others long hours of initial conversation (Altemose and McCarty 2001; Starr 2001). Though these extensive conversations successfully bridge social differences, the substantial time investment precludes fast-paced coalition development, which could be necessary for taking advantage of political opportunities or combating threats.

Open dialogue can also be produced over the course of participation as members align their individual identity with the collective one through identity talk, or the discussion and contextualization of one’s personal identities. It has two goals: to build solidarity among individuals and to affect self-conceptions and relationships beyond the movement (Breines 1989; Epstein 1991; Hunt and Benford 1994; Lichterman 1999). During this negotiation, collective identity serves as a discursive resource that can be used to address conflict or determine roles (Gray 1989; Hardy, Lawrence, and Grant 2005; McCann 1983). It is translated into action via continued conversations between the coalition and the home organization (Hardy et al. 2005). To be successful, identity talk must be conducted throughout the course of a movement.

Regardless of when dialogue is initiated, organizations help individuals develop a collective identity and align it with their individual identity (Gerhards and Rucht 1992; Passy and Giugni 2000; Smith 2001). In some instances, organizations cultivate participation by providing individuals with the discursive resources they need to develop a new collective identity (Minkoff 1997; Nagel 1995; Pulido 1996). Although some scholars suggest that identity-based organizing makes it impossible to recruit individuals who identify differently (Kauffman 1990; Piore 1995), Karen Beckwith (1996) demonstrates that individuals who are not directly affected or do not share an identity can be tied to movements if they are socially connected to others who are affected.

Shared Ideology

Branching off from the focus on collective identity, some scholars have begun to address the use of ideology to build coalitions. Ideology can be conceptualized as a coherent and relatively stable system of ideas that provides values, beliefs, and goals (Gerring 1997). I use the term “shared ideology” to highlight the fact that ideologies are preexisting and relatively stable so that individuals may shift and align their ideologies, but they are unlikely to develop new ones.

Both individuals and organizations have their own ideologies that help them decide if, and how, to participate in a movement (Oliver and Johnston 2000; Snow and Benford 1988; Van Dyke and McCammon 2010a; Zald 2000). Coalitions are more likely to arise among organizations

that have flexible and congruent ideologies (Bandy and Smith 2005; Cornfield and McCammon 2010; Gerhards and Rucht 1992; Lichterman 1995; McCammon and Campbell 2002; Roth 2010; Van Dyke 2003). However, within these organizations, individuals can adhere to various beliefs so that they may not be completely ideologically aligned (Aho 1990; Blee 2002; Ferree et al. 2002; Williams and Blackburn 1996; Woodberry and Smith 1998). In fact, ideological congruence is less likely with the more social distance there is among members (Barkan 1986). Studying whites in black-centered social movements, Jill McCorkel and Jason Rodriguez (2009) find that white participants developed a strategic self that allowed them to participate but that did not address larger issues of racial difference or privilege; not making the ideological shifts necessary to comply with the collective identity of the movement contributed to the rise of conflict. This suggests that conflict-free collective action and collation formation are more likely when individual, organizational, and movement ideologies are aligned.

Ideological alignment is largely achieved when individuals work to maintain the goals, strategies, and ideologies of the larger group (Berger 1981; Rochford 1985). Though Daniel B. Cornfield and Holly J. McCammon (2010) demonstrate that ideology can shift over time to build a coalition, there is little research concerning whether ideologies can change after coalitions have been formed or how this would be negotiated. Given the similar uses of collective identity and shared ideology to facilitate participation, it seems likely that ideological alignment is also constructed throughout the life of a coalition and over the course of a movement (Klandermans and de Weerd 2000; Melucci 1995; Polleta and Jasper 2001). Yet, we know relatively little about what this process looks like.

A review of the literature on coalitions demonstrates that collective identity and shared ideology both offer opportunities for building coalitions across differences. Yet, we do not know if the process or utility of building a shared ideology versus a collective identity differ. Additionally, we still know relatively little about the microdynamics of navigating coalition spaces. It is critical that we understand how individuals negotiate differences and address conflict within these spaces because of the utility of coalitions in social movements. This article addresses these gaps by examining the day-to-day experiences within a cross-status coalition and demonstrating how working with a shared ideology allows for the quick unification of a diversely identified membership and promotes the successful negotiation of identity-based differences.

Data and Methods

I conducted a case study of the DREAM Coalition, a coalition of student organizations at a university in Southern California. I refer to organizational representatives as members of the Coalition because they were participating in Coalition spaces. I draw my data from ten months of ethnographic participant observation and 31 in-depth interviews with Coalition members. Although I attended Coalition activities for ten months before it dissipated³, the majority of observations are from its most active period, April to June 2009. I began observations a few weeks after the Coalition formed and attended a variety of meetings, actions, and social events. During this time, I had informal conversations with members about their experiences in the Coalition.

After observing the Coalition for three months, I conducted one-on-one interviews with Coalition members. I recruited interview participants at Coalition meetings, through mass e-mails to the electronic mailing list, and personal e-mails to any individual who had attended at least one weekly meeting. I also contacted any individual who was identified by other interviewees as a member of the Coalition. These efforts allowed me to interview highly active members as well as

3. Dissipation of the Coalition was related to the graduation of most of the Coalition's leaders, a lack of political opportunity due to the DREAM Act stalling in Congress, and having met the short-term goals of scheduling legislative visits with all representatives in Southern California and either securing their support or confirming that they would never support the bill.

those who were temporarily involved or on the margins of the Coalition. With the exception of a few individuals who did not respond, I interviewed almost all of the Coalition's members.

In total, I interviewed 14 undocumented members, 14 citizen members, and 3 members who recently legalized their immigration status. In the undocumented sample, there were 11 Latinas/os and 3 Asian Pacific Islanders. In the citizen sample, there were 6 Latinas/os, 6 Asian Pacific Islanders, and 2 whites. All citizens were children of immigrants with the exception of the 2 white members and a Filipino student who immigrated as a permanent resident at a young age. Citizen and undocumented students represented a variety of organizations and all members varied in their year in college and level of prior participation in student organizations.

Using a semistructured interview guide, I collected background information about past educational and activist experiences. The majority of the interview focused on their experiences within the Coalition—how they got involved, their participation, and assessments of others' participation. I coded my interview transcripts and field notes for key points at which legal status emerged as an issue; this included joining the coalition, recruitment practices, and discussions about legal status, identity, ideology, power, privilege, conflict, and cooperation.

The Case: Undocumented Students and the DREAM Coalition

Having grown up in the United States, undocumented immigrant youth are practically indistinguishable from their citizen peers (Abrego 2006). However, their legal status produces unequal access to higher education, lowered educational aspirations, and uncertain futures (Abrego and Gonzales 2010; Enriquez 2011; Gonzales 2010; Huber and Malagon 2007). The 5 to 10 percent who manage to pursue higher education are faced with the possibility of being unable to utilize their degrees within the United States (Gonzales 2007). Yet, the DREAM Act presents a beacon of hope for these youth who have grown up and built lives in the United States. Existing in multiple versions since 2001, the DREAM Act would allow undocumented young adults under the age of 35 to legalize their status if they entered the United States before the age of 16, lived in the United States for at least five years, obtained a high school diploma or equivalent, and spent at least two years at an institution of higher education or in the military. Given these specifications, two million undocumented youth would have the opportunity to legalize their status (Batalova and McHugh 2010).

Despite not having access to traditional political rights, undocumented students have fueled over ten years of political campaigns in favor of access to in-state tuition and financial aid, the DREAM Act, and other pro-immigrant policies (Gonzales 2008; Seif 2004). In California, undocumented students have had access to in-state college tuition rates⁴ since 2002, which has driven the establishment of campus-based undocumented student organizations (The SIN Collective 2007). Students for Education, Access, Dreams, and Success (SEADS) is the main undocumented student organization on the university campus where I conducted my fieldwork and, like most, is composed primarily of Latina/o undocumented students. Intended to support undocumented students on campus, the organization initially sought to provide resources to undocumented students and, over the years, began to participate in advocacy efforts for more supportive campus policies, positive state legislation, and the DREAM Act. In response to their growing influence on campus, other student organizations began supporting undocumented student issues.

Hoping to harness this energy, the DREAM Coalition was founded in March of 2009. It brought together over 20 on-campus student organizations in order to coordinate efforts to raise awareness and pass the newly reintroduced federal DREAM Act. Though SEADS was one of these organizations, the majority were racial/ethnic organizations and others were religiously or

4. Similar policies exist in other states, including Colorado, Connecticut, Hawaii, Illinois, Kansas, Maryland, Minnesota, Nebraska, New Mexico, New York, Oklahoma, Oregon, Rhode Island, Texas, Utah, and Washington (National Immigration Law Center 2013).

politically oriented. The large number of racial/ethnic organizations stems from the Coalition's secondary goal to call attention to the existence of non-Latina/o undocumented immigrants.

The Coalition held weekly one-hour meetings that were attended by at least one organizational representative who was expected to relay information and assist with organizing events. These meetings had set agendas that started with members introducing themselves and reviewing the prior week's business. The majority of the meetings were spent discussing upcoming events—appointing planning committees and giving feedback on event plans—as well as identifying targets and strategies for future actions. Planning committee members were expected to meet between weekly meetings to decide specific event logistics. As a result, members had varying levels of participation in the Coalition ranging from low (e.g., inconsistently attending weekly meetings) to high (e.g., attending every weekly meeting, some event planning meetings, and most events). This setup allowed for varying levels of participation and provided few group opportunities to develop members' identities or ideologies. I focus my study on these representatives since they were the ones actively negotiating cross-legal status relationships.

Although there were a few citizen members of SEADS and undocumented members in the other organizations, the DREAM Coalition was the first space that had equal numbers of undocumented and citizen students working together on immigration-related issues. With neither group forming a majority, members were forced to recognize and negotiate their respective legal statuses. Thus, this case provides a prime example for studying cross-status coalition building.

Jump-Starting a Coalition: Recruitment, Commitment, and Shared Ideology

During recruitment, organizations align individual identities and ideologies with collective ones (McCorkel and Rodriguez 2009; Polleta and Jasper 2001). In many cases, a single identity is made salient amid multiple competing identities in order to promote a collective identity (Lichterman 1999; Pulido 1996). Yet, I suggest that developing a collective identity can be particularly difficult, and perhaps counterproductive, in the case of cross-status coalitions where individuals intentionally emphasize their different identities to expand their political power. Further, there was no preexisting collective identity that could be used to recruit both undocumented and citizen members.

Instead, the Coalition's founders elected to recruit organizations and committed representatives by concentrating on shared ideology. Focusing on social justice-oriented student organizations, they conducted a targeted recruitment of ideologically aligned organizations. These identity-based organizations had already developed their members' collective identity and instilled them with a social justice ideology. Social justice ideology encompasses a belief that all forms of oppression support one another and that one marginalized group will only achieve equality if others do as well (Collins 2000; hooks 2000). It also recognizes that identities are intersectional and requires that each individual use his/her privilege to further the causes of others rather than reproduce inequality (see Bedolla 2007). Though identities informed individuals' ideologies, Coalition members relied on their ideology, not their identity, to justify their own and their organization's participation in the Coalition. Moreover, recruiting based on ideology allowed members to maintain their various individual identities while developing a connection to the Coalition's goals. I suggest that broad-based ideologies are a practical and efficient means of facilitating high levels of participation because they allow for fast-paced recruitment and encourage individuals to make strong connections to the issue, regardless of their specific social location.

Fast-Paced Recruitment: Targeting the Ideologically Similar

Over the course of a few months, the Coalition gained the support of 25 diversely identified, on-campus student organizations, the majority of which were recruited in a few weeks. Of these

organizations, only two served undocumented students. Fourteen focused on racial/ethnic minorities: eight Latina/o, four Asian Pacific Islander, one Afghan, and one Palestinian. Of the remaining, two were LGBTQ focused, one focused on workers' rights, two were religious, and four broadly defined themselves as progressive political organizations. Given that there were only two undocumented student organizations, it would have been insufficient to develop a coalition around the collective identity of undocumented status. Alternatively, the Coalition could have developed an innovative collective identity such as that of social justice activist; however, a significant amount of identity work would have been required to achieve this (see Pulido 1996). Focusing on a shared ideology proved an efficient means of bringing together organizations and individuals that did not necessarily share a collective identity.

One of the Coalition's founders, Robert Cisneros, a citizen ally and student government leader, explained that they intentionally targeted ideologically aligned organizations:

Historically a lot of org[anization]s of color have had to work together to maintain a lot of things that they have like the Center for Student Organizations. That's one big example of how they all work together to maintain a space . . . So I think it's always been easier to outreach to each other. And it's also because a lot of these people tend to understand a little bit about why something like the DREAM Act needs to pass.

Robert pointed to two reasons behind targeting these specific organizations—they had historical alliances and ideological similarities. Building on this point of shared ideology, Robert explained that other student organizations, like the fraternity or sorority councils, “won't really understand why they should put work into it.” Aiming to quickly mobilize organizations that would be active members, the founders targeted social justice-oriented student organizations because they assumed they would understand the importance of the DREAM Act. Thus, while Robert noted that they targeted racial/ethnic organizations, he suggested that they did so because of their shared ideological commitments, not their collective identity. Targeting these ideologically aligned, identity-based organizations, the Coalition acquired representatives who they could assume had already developed an ideological commitment to social justice. This freed the Coalition from having to actively develop these ideologies within Coalition spaces.

Although Coalition members represented various identity-based organizations, they all attributed their participation to their social justice ideology. For instance, Danielle Nguyen, a citizen member, explained that the Vietnamese student organization she represented joined the Coalition because:

it was something that . . . we just linked with. We support affirmative action. We support all these things for the betterment of communities of color, of disadvantaged people, of women . . . I think it was understood that we should be a part of this.

Directly linking her ethnic community with other marginalized groups, Danielle confirms Robert's point that underlying social justice ideologies, not a collective identity, spurred her and her organization's participation. Thus, despite occupying different identities, members shared an ideological belief that various marginalized communities needed to unite to combat social inequality.

The Coalition's founders strategically recruited organizations and representatives that shared a social justice ideology. Although members spoke of their individual identities, they did so only to demonstrate the connections between communities. This suggests that shared ideology can be used to facilitate the speedy development of a cross-status coalition and allow for quick responses to political opportunities and threats.

Committing Core Members: Facilitating Multilayered Connections

The Coalition's recruitment tactics ensured that the organizations they approached shared their social justice ideologies. Despite this, the organizations and core members still had to be

convinced to commit themselves to this cause. Even though almost all members credited their participation to a personal connection to undocumented migration, the most active members developed multilayered connections. The Coalition's founders encouraged this heightened commitment by allowing members to center whatever identity they found salient in order to make a second, and thus stronger, connection to the issue.

Almost every Coalition member cited a personal connection to undocumented migration. Undocumented members were driven to participate as beneficiaries of the DREAM Act. Samantha Ortega explained that while she is interested in the environmental justice movement, "I've been working on the DREAM Act stuff since I started college. Since I realized that that's something important." She referred to the realization that the DREAM Act is the only way for her to legalize her status and reach her personal goals. On the other hand, citizen members spoke of their social ties to undocumented immigrants. Although some pointed to their undocumented family members, most spoke about their undocumented friends. For example, John Chung, a member of a political student organization, explained that his bandmate is an undocumented student and that when he found out, "it just really hit close to home at that point and I decided that I wanted to lobby on it." All members, regardless of the strength of their personal connections or amount of participation, attributed a portion of their participation to these personal connections. This suggests that social ties were not necessarily responsible for shaping commitment levels.

The most active members, those who attended extra meetings and organized events, made additional, explicit connections between their own communities and undocumented migration. Yadi Brown, an undocumented Latina member commented, "I think that it affects people indirectly especially if you're Latino. It affects your whole community." There are approximately nine million undocumented immigrants within the Latina/o community. Thus, many undocumented members believed that this issue affects all Latinas/os—regardless of legal status—because there is a high probability that a citizen Latina/o either knows or is related to an undocumented person. Alternatively, Asian Pacific Islander (API) undocumented students cited the statistic that 40 percent of undocumented UC students are API (UCOP 2007). The most active citizen API members made similar community-level connections. For example, Mike Zhou, a second-generation biracial Chinese-Russian citizen student, cited these numbers saying that he joined the Coalition to raise awareness about how undocumented migration "isn't just a Latino issue. That the faces of undocumented students are very diverse." Expanding on this, Maria Partida, a second-generation Latina Muslim student stated:

there are a lot of . . . undocumented people within the South Asian community and some Arab . . . After 9/11 there were a lot of deportations even though people were citizens and stuff like that and had green cards. It really has affected a lot of the [Muslim] community.

Connecting immigration issues to their respective communities legitimated their participation by giving them another way to demonstrate their connection to the affected population (see Beckwith 1996). In addition, the community-based justifications of these most active members demonstrate their strong social justice ideologies as they stressed the connections between multiple communities. Their focus on these intersections indicates that members with stronger social justice ideologies were able to make multiple layers of connection to the issue. This appears to deepen their commitment and stimulate higher participation levels.

I contend that the shared social justice ideology provided a unique opportunity for members from differing social locations to highlight whatever salient identities caused the issue to resonate with them. If these individuals had been recruited to the Coalition through a specific collective identity, they would have had to set aside these other identities as members of marginalized populations and communities affected by undocumented migration. This would have made it more difficult to develop and voice their commitment to the Coalition's goals. Thus, using a preexisting shared ideology was not only more efficient, because this identity and ideology work had already been conducted, but it also led members to make multiple, and stronger, connections to the issue

and increased their commitment to the Coalition. This resembles patterns that Kathleen Blee (2012) identifies in grassroots organizations and suggests that coalitions can avoid extensive open dialogue by recruiting member organizations that are similar to themselves (i.e., have a shared ideology). Although they could have elected to build a collective identity, perhaps one of social justice advocate, this would have been costly, in terms of time and resources, and potentially less effective in producing commitment.

Power and Legal Status: Facilitating Participation through Legal Status-Based Roles

Ideology not only influenced how leaders formed the Coalition but it also shaped the roles and types of power assigned to individual members. Examining the roles individuals take on in organizations, Blee (2012) finds that credibility can be assigned based on actions and potential contributions or by connection to the issue. In the case of the DREAM Coalition, individuals negotiated their participation through predetermined roles that were based on people's connection to the issue (i.e., their legal status) and the type of power that gave them. The Coalition's leaders used the shared social justice ideology to create simplified participation guidelines that linked an individual's potential contributions to his or her legal status. Stressing the differing political power associated with their legal status, members came to understand their position within the Coalition as either an undocumented student who had emotional power or a citizen ally who had electoral power. In this way, the Coalition's leaders prompted individuals to easily negotiate their differing legal statuses and quickly get involved by transforming complex ideological beliefs about power and privilege into explicit, identity-based roles.

Storytellers: The Emotional Power of Undocumented Members

Most undocumented students discovered the emotional power of their stories during high school when they told their teachers, school officials, mentors, and friends about their immigration status in order to gain access to resources and emotional support. Participation in undocumented student organizations further encouraged undocumented students to speak about their experiences, usually during educational events and advocacy efforts. Recounting his experiences with the Coalition, Martín Gomez explained, "It's empowering because I remember when I was a student in high school, I could barely advocate for myself if at all." As a result of his continued participation and advocacy, Martín began to associate his undocumented status with a sense of empowerment. Seeing the effect their stories had, not only on people who they had deep relationships with, but also acquaintances and strangers, all of the undocumented members began to associate their undocumented status with feelings of confidence, power, and purpose. As a result, their undocumented status became a key part of their identity. Additionally, it resonated with their social justice ideology, which suggested that a marginalized group should articulate their own needs and lead the movement to claim their own rights.

Undocumented members drew upon these previous experiences to invoke a sense of empowerment and control. They knew that their stories had the power to convince others to help them on an individual level, and they began to see this power as one that could have national implications for passing the DREAM Act. As a result, both undocumented and citizen members envisioned undocumented members as the ones who held the emotional power:

[Undocumented students] give a face to the stories that are told. Personal testimonials are really the most important thing in a movement to make people feel emotional towards the goals and what's going on. 'Cause otherwise they're just gonna see the facts, and people aren't interested in being involved with that (Beth Charles, citizen).

Allies don't have that "I'm an undocumented student story." . . . Let's say an ally gives a workshop. When it's time to really engage with the audience and take the stuff behind you on the screen back to your personal life, it's a bit more challenging. It's harder for your audience to connect with you (Samantha Ortega, undocumented).

Both Beth and Samantha clearly explained that undocumented status affects the story you can tell and the effect that it will have on the audience. When asked about the role of undocumented members in the Coalition, all of the interviewees made similar references to the strategic importance of storytelling and the emotional power that undocumented students held over potential allies and politicians. Additionally, other studies document how undocumented youth, despite the risks, share their stories in order to create social change (Gonzales 2008; Seif 2004; The SIN collective 2007). This legal status-based emotional power caused all members to frame undocumented students as the storytellers of the movement; their legal status, life experiences, identities, and power became intertwined with the role they played.

Voters: The Electoral Power of Citizen Members

Few citizen members had grappled with the significance of their legal status prior to joining the Coalition. For example, Danielle Nguyen explained:

I didn't realize that being a citizen was a privilege. I saw being white as a privilege, being rich as a privilege. But then I thought, "Wow if there is so much that I can do as a citizen that other folks can't . . . [I should get involved]." I'm just not someone who believes in stripping away human rights.

Building on her prior social consciousness, the Coalition's efforts made legal status a salient identity for Danielle and her fellow citizen members who had not previously considered their citizenship privilege. Being on the subordinate side of racial and class hierarchies and having a social justice ideology, they understood that their newfound privilege required them to use it to create positive social change.

Citizen members found that voting was one of the explicit privileges that came with their legal status. As a result, most respondents suggested the role of citizen members was to invoke his or her electoral power over elected officials:

I think that as an ally you should harass Congress. Constantly call and e-mail and fax and text message . . . [Send] smoke signals to your representatives to change the laws (Hope Smith, citizen).

Strategically, the biggest impact that allies make at this point is as legal voting citizens or constituents of the representatives we're trying to target . . . They have more access. I feel that they have a bigger voice when it comes down to those things. I could write all the letters I want to a representative, but I'm still not electing that representative (Samantha Ortega, undocumented).

Speaking about the role of citizens, both Hope and Samantha focused on the importance of contacting and influencing members of Congress. They explicitly connected citizenship status with power and increased influence over an individual's elected representative. Given that the Coalition was also focused on recruiting local representatives to become cosponsors of the DREAM Act, citizens were framed as key players in facilitating access to these representatives.

The Coalition's founders encouraged specific legal status-based roles in order to facilitate immediate participation and the easy navigation of individuals' legal status differences. Ideological beliefs about power and privilege were used to denote legal status-based roles that elucidated the types of power held by individuals. Although ideologies supply a complex set of values and beliefs that can spur collective action (Oliver and Johnston 2000), these identity-based roles simplified ideas about power so that individuals could get immediately involved while helping them properly interpret their role in light of the shared ideology. I suggest that developing a collective identity, instead of this shared ideology, could have slowed down this mobilization process by making it difficult to highlight legal status, and the different powers and roles associated with undocumented status and citizenship.

Conflict and Cooperation: Negotiating Legal Status, Participation Roles, and Ideology

Breaking down complex social justice ideology, these legal status-based roles facilitated members' involvement but also created fodder for potential conflict. Specifically, the rigid simplicity of the roles limited each individual's ability to develop flexible and context-dependent understandings of their legal status power. Conflict arose when some members took on assigned roles but did not adhere to the shared social justice ideology. Alternatively, others abandoned legal status roles and consciously reevaluated their social position, power, and privilege. Drawing on the shared social justice ideology, they adjusted their participation and used their legal status in ways that combated, rather than reinforced, conventional understandings of power. This suggests that Coalition members successfully negotiated their roles by sustaining cross-status interactions and actively engaging in what I call "ideology talk." Similar to identity talk (Hardy et al. 2005; Hunt and Benford 1994; Lichterman 1999), ideology talk, in this case, encouraged critical reflection on power and privilege in order to reinforce shared social justice ideologies. I develop an analysis of this process using examples of two of the most prominent types of conflict regarding: (1) who has electoral power and knowledge and (2) who should speak out about the needs of undocumented students.

Sustained Interaction: Differentiating Electoral Power and Knowledge

The legal status-based roles encouraged citizen members to participate by embracing their electoral power and using the privileges of their citizenship status to meet with and persuade elected officials to support the DREAM Act. Building on this role, some citizen members turned their self-identification with electoral power into an assumption that undocumented members lacked this particular power. Mimicking larger societal messages about the powerlessness of undocumented immigrants, the connection between citizenship status and electoral power morphed into a larger stereotype about undocumented students' lack of electoral knowledge. While these actions subscribed to the legal status-based roles, they violated the shared ideology of social justice by reproducing the marginalization of undocumented members. This often led to conflict as political knowledge is not inherent to citizenship status and can be cultivated among individuals regardless of legal status. I find that those individuals who developed these stereotypes were less active participants and had underdeveloped social justice ideologies. Alternatively, some members fostered cooperation by relying on social justice ideology to combat stereotypes through sustained interaction and allow for the contextual navigation of legal status and its power over legislators.

Attempting to further define their role and carve out a space for themselves, some citizens began to think of themselves as key to the Coalition's legislative goals. Beth Charles, a citizen representative of Student Lobbyists claimed, "I brought the ability to talk to legislators." Though this may be her perception due to her participation in Student Lobbyists and the messages she received about her electoral power, the main organizer of the initial lobbying efforts was Carlos Almanza, an undocumented student. In fact, undocumented students organized most of the lobby visits using a nationally distributed DREAM Act target list. In addition, some citizen members assumed that their ability to vote gave them a better understanding of the legislative process. As a result, when describing their contributions, some conflated electoral power with electoral knowledge. For instance, Juan Zapien, a citizen member, suggested that, "folks that were in SEADS or were undocumented, maybe didn't understand the political process." With this remark, Juan revealed an assumed connection between being undocumented and not having political knowledge. Reflecting on similar dynamics, Samantha Ortega, an undocumented member, explained that she encountered a fair amount of citizen allies who made assumptions about her political knowledge because of her undocumented status:

They [think they] know better . . . I hate that! I hate that so much! It's condescending to think that because you're documented, you know better . . . I don't know how someone could ever assume that

because I'm undocumented, I don't understand the legislative process . . . They question your methodology assuming that because you're undocumented, you can't navigate the system.

Although Samantha was only speaking about a select few, these allies had overextended their roles as holders of electoral power into stereotypes about electoral knowledge. Like Samantha, many undocumented members asserted and demonstrated that while electoral power is tied to citizenship, this does not mean that undocumented immigrants are incapable of participating in the political processes. In fact, many of the undocumented members I spoke to demonstrated that they had well-developed political knowledge and skill sets, mostly from being educated in U.S. classrooms and having participated in past local, state, and national campaigns for immigrant and undocumented student rights.

In contrast to those citizen members who extrapolated from their electoral power, some citizen members effectively addressed this potential for conflict by rejecting such assumptions. Spending a substantial amount of time within the Coalition space allowed them to foster understandings of electoral power and knowledge that countered essentialized legal status-based stereotypes. These active citizen members had varying connections to undocumented individuals, but they all expressed a strong commitment to the shared social justice ideology, which encouraged them to participate more. Take the example of Esther Dong, a citizen representative of a Southeast Asian organization. She did not have any strong ties to undocumented immigrants prior to joining the Coalition, but she had a deep social justice ideology. Reflecting on her experiences in Coalition spaces, she explained:

I learned a lot of different methods. What it takes to push a policy like the DREAM Act. Phone banking. Being in connection with senators and Congress people . . . It was really nice seeing the strategy laid out from phone banking, to letter writing, postcards, putting pressure on certain people. Hearing if we got this person or this person signed on.

Consistently attending weekly and supplementary meetings as well as helping organize events, Esther learned about the nature of political campaigns from undocumented members and saw their political knowledge in action. Spending significant amounts of time with undocumented members, these active citizen members also sought to check their privilege by drawing on their social justice ideology. Esther noted that participating in the Coalition taught her to be, "aware of your actions or comments that could alienate them . . . Thinking about social events [and] thinking about how money could play into it. Just being really conscious of [legal] status in what you say, things you propose." Relying on their current exposure to undocumented students, more active citizen members were able to step away from legal status-based roles and focus on maintaining a social justice ideology that encouraged them to avoid marginalizing others. As a result, they reimagined how legal status might operate in conjunction with electoral power and knowledge. This contact helped them counteract negative stereotypes and encouraged flexible understandings of power that were in line with their shared ideology.

Opening up their minds to the potential political knowledge and power of both groups allowed citizen and undocumented members to navigate their respective legal statuses within each situation so they could successfully lobby local congressional members. Being open to different types of electoral power, they were able to discuss the viewpoints of legislators openly and tailor their visits accordingly. Recognizing that each individual elected official has a different understanding of who is part of his or her constituency, the Coalition tailored their deployment of legal status to appeal to each elected official:

Bessie tells me that she was just talking to someone who used to work for Congresswoman Waters. They told her that it is really easy to get a meeting with her. All you have to do is have two people who live in her area and have a voting record and then they can set up a meeting (field notes, May 30, 2009).

Kim says, "We want to put Congressman Becerra on the spot in the media. Tell him that kids are getting deported." Abril suggests that in future meetings with him we need to be prepared for his, "we need comprehensive immigration reform not just the DREAM Act" response. She says that when she met with him to ask for the DREAM Act, his response was, "What am I gonna tell your parents?" She says that she had

a letter from her dad with her; she showed it to him, and then he couldn't say anything in response (field notes, April 15, 2009).

Drawing upon prior experiences and understandings of these two elected officials, Coalition members came to realize that Congresswoman Waters understood her constituency as frequent citizen voters while Congressman Becerra's included undocumented immigrants. By catering to each elected official's definition of their constituency, the Coalition was able to schedule meetings with both representatives and secure their cosponsorship. Countering the earlier definitions of citizens' privileged electoral power, these lobby visits and interactions with elected officials suggest that electoral power evolves and is context dependent. As a result, Coalition members had to be ready and willing to depart from their original understandings of electoral power and reformulate their roles based on specific contexts in order to meet their goals. This was easier for undocumented members who had already come to terms with their electoral knowledge and potential power. Alternatively, citizen members were more likely to make this shift if they had spent more time in Coalition spaces that encouraged them to recognize and respect that undocumented members could also have political knowledge and power.

Conflict over understandings of electoral knowledge and power could be remedied if there was an opportunity to combat the essentialized stereotypes that emerged from legal status-based roles. The most active citizen members were best able to negotiate this because their heightened exposure to undocumented members allowed them to see the power and knowledge of undocumented members. Their strong social justice ideology then encouraged them to respect this power rather than rely on the predetermined roles that could have contributed to the further marginalization of undocumented members. Allowing for contextual navigation of legal status and its power over others, subsequently allowed the Coalition to be more successful in meeting its goal of securing additional cosponsors for the DREAM Act.

Ideology Talk: Respecting Each Other's Stories

While undocumented members were encouraged to share their stories, Coalition leaders were simultaneously telling citizen members to use their privileged position to raise awareness about undocumented migration. Struggling to align this directive with their legal status-based roles, I find that racial/ethnic background intervened so that Asian Pacific Islander citizen members were encouraged to speak out while Latina/o citizen members were not. This was due to the desire to highlight API voices in a movement dominated by Latinas/os (Bangalon, Peralta, and Enriquez 2012; Chan 2010). Although 23 percent of undocumented immigrants are not of Latina/o origin and half of these are API (Passel and Cohn 2009), the virtual absence of undocumented API members willing to speak publically about their legal status led to the recruitment of citizen API speakers. This suggests that privileged individuals (e.g., citizens) can simultaneously occupy a marginalized social location (e.g., API racial identity), which dictates alternative types of participation and access to power. Given these differences, I find that individuals were able to successfully renegotiate their initial assigned roles and address potential conflict if they engaged in "ideology talk," or conversations and self-reflection that encouraged them to (re)evaluate their participation in light of social justice ideologies.

Most of the members I spoke to noted that many undocumented students were scared to speak up about their legal status. In fact, focusing on undocumented members' emotional power and storytelling role was intended to encourage more members to speak about their legal status. Though more undocumented students have begun to publically speak out about their legal status (see O'Neill 2012; Rojas 2011), at the time there were fewer Latina/o undocumented students speaking out and relatively no vocal API undocumented students. Stephanie Cortez, an undocumented member explained:

A lot of undocumented students choose not to come out because of their legal status. So having allies speak on their behalf does help the movement in the sense that [it's] helping bring this issue to light without having to disclose the identity of the undocumented population.

Citizen members, like Joshua Agbagani expressed a similar understanding, “It’s difficult just to go out and be like, ‘Oh hey [I’m undocumented].’ It’s hard to be active . . . when you’re . . . put in a corner or you’re afraid that you might get deported.” Given these risks, most Coalition members still believed that undocumented members’ emotional power made them the best candidates for speaking out, but that citizen members could also speak out when undocumented students’ participation posed a danger to their well-being.

Most often, the citizen members who spoke at events were those who identified as Asian Pacific Islander. Attempting to increase awareness about how undocumented immigration affects all racial/ethnic communities, event organizers wanted to include the stories of API undocumented students. Because no API undocumented students were willing to speak, they recruited two API citizens to speak on separate occasions to ensure that the API undocumented student voice was included. Mike Zhou was asked to read a testimony written by Carl, a Korean undocumented student, and Leila Chim was invited to share the story of her friend Dara, a Cambodian undocumented student who had dropped out of the university. They reflected on these experiences:

You never want to speak for people. But I think in this situation, people, for extremely valid reasons, don’t want to come out and tell their story ‘cause they might get deported . . . I understand Carl’s reasons for not wanting to do it, and Carl wanted me to tell it because I look Asian and it fits with the story a little better (Mike Zhou, citizen).

I was really hesitant to do it . . . I knew that I didn’t want to keep her situation invisible [but] I’m someone who believes a lot in someone telling their own story . . . Her situation and the things she had to deal with, they speak for themselves. The fact that she had an under-the-table job and had to deal with a boss who was very unfair about her situation. The fact that she struggled in school because she had to be working all the time, and she had to pay for her own tuition (Leila Chim, citizen).

In both cases, Mike and Leila were hesitant to speak because it could be seen as co-opting another’s story and overstepping their own privilege. Having faced these issues in their previous community work, their initial reactions were to abide by the electoral roles assigned to them and allow undocumented students to share their own stories. However, faced with the possibility of excluding the experiences of Asian Pacific Islander undocumented students at events, they both reflected on their dedication to social justice, discussed their participation with others, and chose to use the security that their citizenship provided them to ensure that these stories and voices were heard. Mike’s comment also highlights the intersectional nature of race/ethnicity and legal status, noting that he was chosen because of his shared racial background and the authenticity that would give the testimony. Engaging in ideology talk, they were able to negotiate and reevaluate their participation in light of the broader tenets of social justice ideology—complex definitions of power, the strategic use of privilege to amplify the voices of others, and understandings of intersecting identities. Doing so enabled the Coalition to successfully educate others about the existence and needs of API undocumented students and eventually encouraged two API undocumented students to share their stories publicly. Thus, while Mike and Leila abandoned their initial roles, they openly discussed and negotiated their positionality to ensure that they adhered to the Coalition’s larger social justice ideology.

Although the storytelling performed by these API citizens was positively received, it made it difficult for non-API citizen members to understand their role within the Coalition. The boundaries around roles and legal status blurred, and many Latina/o citizen members were unable to explain why citizens like Mike and Leila were speaking out and what this meant for their own participation. As a result, some Latina/o citizen members began to be more vocal and were scrutinized for overstepping their privilege as many Latina/o undocumented members were willing to share their stories. Suzy Caranza, an undocumented member, heatedly recounted an experience where a Latina citizen member advocated for the DREAM Act while she stood a few feet away.

You’re talking about undocumented students. You’re talking about me. And you’re talking about our struggle. I’m glad you’re talking about it, but fool, I can speak for myself! I am not shy about it. I can talk about it. And just the fact that she was so uuugggh about it. She was speaking for me.

When I asked if her reaction had to do with her friend's citizenship status she responded: "If it had been [an undocumented student] that had been talking about it so much, I would have been proud of her. More proud of her than feeling put down by her." Comparing this instance with the experiences of API citizen members suggests that conflict erupts when speaking about undocumented student issues becomes speaking for undocumented students who are willing to speak for themselves. Additionally, Mike and Leila had been engaged in critical conversations about social justice in order to evaluate their social positions and the positives and negatives of speaking out. However, my conversations with Suzy's offender revealed that she had not been encouraged to consider the effect that speaking from her specific social location had on her undocumented peers nor how this diverged from their social justice goals. In other words, she had not engaged in ideology talk. As a result, she was unable to resituate herself into an acceptable role that would have helped her participate in a way that acknowledged her privileged status as a citizen, as well as how being a Latina in this context was privileged in relation to API voices. Engaging in this discussion could have prevented her from acting in ways that were perceived as oppositional to the social justice ideology of the Coalition.

On the other hand, when Latina/o citizens tried to assert their own emotional connections to the movement, they were usually invalidated. For example, during a Los Angeles-wide DREAM Act retreat, Bessie Bascome, one of the founders, was representing the Coalition.

She spoke about her commitment to the movement citing the inspirational stories of her undocumented friends. An undocumented student responded saying that she needs to think more critically about why she is committed to the issue. Bessie's face fell and the conversation moved on. During the break, I found her crying by herself in a backroom. She struggled to understand why her commitment had been questioned and why she is not allowed to talk about how it hurts her to see her friends in pain (field notes, January 16, 2010).

Though no one spoke about these issues during the interviews, some Latina/o citizen members hinted at similar confusion during private informal conversations in the field. They wondered why they were not allowed to speak out about the issue and how it affected them as citizen friends, family members, and romantic partners of undocumented students. Forced to hide their emotional connections, many felt silenced by the exclusive right undocumented students had to storytelling; most felt guilty for feeling silenced. If not for this guilt, it is possible that this silencing could have led to conflict or at least the disengagement of these citizen members. These issues were never discussed publically, but the social justice ideology of the Coalition would appear to dictate that members should value each other's stories and feelings regardless of their legal status. I propose that ideology talk would have helped raise awareness of the feelings of marginalization these sanctions caused and would have allowed them to discuss and address the complex feelings that were arising deep in the hearts of citizen members.

I suggest that contested incidences of storytelling could have been better negotiated if the Coalition had promoted ideology talk in order to guide the development of the social justice ideology that was needed to negotiate these complex issues. Though the process and utility of ideology talk resembles that of identity talk, I differentiate the two based on the content of the conversations. The successful negotiation of one's role occurred with discussion, not necessarily of one's legal status identity, but of how the shared social justice ideology dictated the navigation of the power assigned to this social position in this specific context. If these discussions had taken place, members might have been better able to navigate their legal status in light of their multiple identities and the social justice ideologies that require them to respect each other's stories and acknowledge their own privileges and power.

Looking closely at the day-to-day interactions within the DREAM Coalition reveals that conflict arose when individuals did not have the shared understandings necessary to continually renegotiate their participation. I find that departing from the simplified legal status-based roles enabled members to take flexible and context-dependent approaches to their participation and allowed them to remain in line with the larger commitment to social justice ideology. Although

recruiting based on a shared ideology facilitated quick-paced coalition formation, sustained cross-status interactions and the active negotiation of the shared social justice ideology via ideology talk were necessary for individuals to successfully negotiate their legal statuses and engage in productive relations across different social positions. Overall, these data reveal that openly discussing and navigating shared ideology can minimize the disruption caused by conflict and can lead to more effective claims making.

Conclusion

Coalitions play a critical role in social movements while presenting unique challenges to collective action as individuals cross organizational, movement, and social boundaries in order to address shared goals (Beamish and Luebbers 2009; Bystydzienski and Schacht 2001; McCorkel and Rodriquez 2009). Despite this, there is relatively little scholarship on the day-to-day negotiations within coalition spaces (Van Dyke and McCammon 2010a). Extending from the larger social movements literature, most coalition scholarship focuses on the creation and navigation of collective identities (Beckwith 1998; Kurtz 2002; Lichterman 1999; Oegema and Klardermans 1994; Richards 2004). However, there is a growing discussion of the centrality of shared ideology for facilitating collaboration (Cornfield and McCammon 2010; McCammon and Campbell 2002; Roth 2010; Van Dyke 2003). Yet, few unpack how ideology is used and affects interactions within a coalition (McCorkel and Rodriquez 2009). In the case of the DREAM Coalition, I find that ideology was used to facilitate fast-paced recruitment, create simplified participation guidelines based on individuals' legal statuses, and allow for the strategic renegotiation of participation to increase the probability of reaching the Coalition's goals. As a result, I argue that a shared ideology allows coalitions to successfully develop in a short period of time and work productively across differing social locations.

Most of the literature on recruitment to social movements organizations focuses on aligning individual and collective identities or strategically highlighting a single identity in order to enhance commitment and increase the likelihood of collective action (Pulido 1996; Snow et al. 1986; Stryker 2000). However, I find that Coalition members relied on ideology to justify their own and their organization's participation in the Coalition. Though individuals' ideologies are informed by their identities, I contend that focusing on shared ideology provides an opportunity to deepen individuals' commitment to the coalition by encouraging them to maintain their various identities in order to make multiple, and thus stronger, connections to the issue. This facilitated the quick formation of a coalition of committed organizations and core members by ensuring that Coalition leaders did not have to conduct much identity or ideological work.

Once a coalition is formed, its members must learn to work together in light of their differences. Successful cross-status navigation occurs when members assess how their privileges affect relationships within the coalition, search for commonalities among themselves, and then accept their differences (Bystydzienski and Schacht 2001). In this case, this process was accelerated by coalition leaders who relied on the shared social justice ideology to assign participation roles based on understandings of legal status-based powers. This suggests that ideology can be used to facilitate participation and produce simplified guidelines for working across differences and negotiating variations in power.

While the DREAM Coalition leaders drew on ideology for recruitment purposes, they never extensively discussed or defined ways to deploy this shared social justice ideology. Yet, individuals' participation was expected to fall in line with the larger social justice frameworks that demanded they continually assess their power and privilege. Thus, conflict arose when individuals were unable to redefine their understanding of their role or power in ways that allowed them to remain in line with the shared ideology. Instances of successful negotiation suggest that conflict can be minimized in two ways. First, "ideology talk" allowed members to actively maintain and negotiate tenets of the shared ideology; this resembles the process of identity talk discussed in the literature (see Altemose and McCarty 2001; Gray 1989; Hardy et al. 2005; Hunt and Benford 1994;

Lichterman 1999; Starr 2001). Second, sustained interaction across legal status allowed members to combat essentialized stereotypes and develop strategies for the contextual navigation of legal status. Contrary to the literature, which focuses on the necessity of intensive discussions, this suggests that sustained interaction may be equally critical for promoting understanding and working through differences, especially identity based stereotypes. Both strategies suggest that ideological alignment is conducted over the course of participation.

Overall, I suggest that shared ideology can serve as a platform for rapid mobilization and coalition building. This allows coalitions to capitalize on the shared ideologies that feed into the collective identities without having to discover and develop a collective identity, a process that can be difficult among a diversely identified membership (Kauffman 1990; Piore 1995). Although this allows for quick responses to political opportunities and threats, it simultaneously produces the potential for conflict. However, conflict can be addressed by actively negotiating ideology while participating in the coalition space. Cross-status coalitions could benefit from the purposeful development of discursive and interactive spaces that allow individuals to engage in “ideology talk” where members could develop flexible, context-dependent understandings of their differing powers and privileges. Doing so would allow for the situational deployment of identities and power, which could increase a coalition’s ability to fully utilize its resources and achieve its goals.

By focusing on the lived experiences of members from a cross-status coalition, this article extends current understandings of the microdynamic processes at work when individuals engage in collective action across difference. Though the process of building and deploying a shared ideology appears to be similar to that of a collective identity, I suggest that harnessing a shared ideology, rather than building a collective identity, offers unique advantages, helping to build a cross-status coalition quickly and facilitating working across differences. However, individuals and/or organizations must actively maintain this shared ideology and align their actions with it in order to negotiate conflict successfully. Thus, the deliberate deployment and continual navigation of a shared ideology are key to bridging differences and maintaining a productive coalition space, be it across organizational, movement, or social boundaries. This contributes to our understanding of the role of ideology in coalitions and suggests that future work should continue to explore the relationship between collective identity and shared ideology as well as the similarities and differences of the processes involved in developing them.

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