

BUILDING COMMUNITY-LED DEMOCRACY:
NAVIGATING THE PITFALLS OF OLIGARCHY IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF A
PARTICIPATORY ORGANIZATION

A Thesis

Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School
of Cornell University

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Science

by

Tiffany Nur Darabi

August 2021

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ABSTRACT

This qualitative, inductive single case study examines how an early-stage participatory organization generates participation from its members. This research focuses on the patterns of interaction between staff and the organization's membership base to uncover four strategies which staff use to generate participation amongst members. Contrary to previous scholarly research, this study finds that control can be used to instantiate democracy when it functions to safeguard core organizational values and when it is tethered by other counterbalancing strategies that are more measured in their approach to generating participation, intentional in transferring authority to beneficiaries or purposeful in involving members in aspects of organizational decision-making normally reserved for staff.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Tiffany Nur Darabi is a PhD student at the ILR School of Cornell University. Her research focuses on how organizations generate social value and on how people pursue a sense of meaning in their work. Prior to her academic career she worked in the international development industry for nearly fifteen years as a director and also a free-lance consultant helping mission-driven firms preserve their social mission, while developing strong and effective operational systems. Tiffany has her BA International Relations from Johns Hopkins University.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

A big thank you to The Boston Ujima Project who opened up their doors to someone who was unknown to them to allow for this research to be conducted. Thank you to the funding provided by the Cornell ILR School for masters students to conduct their research. Thank you to my friends who opened their homes in Boston to let me stay with them while collecting my data. Thank you also to the members of my MS committee Marya Besharov (chair) and Pam Tolbert (committee member).

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INTRODUCTION

The endeavors of the social sector to address social problems have come under sharp criticism as of late for their dominance by the elite. The absence of beneficiary voices in positions of power and decision-making authority within organizations risks creating a version of social change in which the deeper systems and structures at the genesis of mounting social issues—the same systems and structures which have guaranteed the powerful their status—are largely left unchecked (Giridharadas, 2018). This pattern, which favors devising solutions within existing societal constructs over more radical approaches that place those in need front and center, can even be seen permeating the ideologies of entire fields dedicated to social good such as social impact investing (Hehenberger, 2019).

An answer to such problems lies in the use of participatory organizational approaches which have been purposefully designed to place beneficiaries at the helm of decision-making within organizational systems. The values of participatory organizations signal a fundamental departure from traditional organizations by placing authority with employees, members or beneficiaries as opposed to organizational leaders or individuals in particular roles or with specific types of expertise (Rothschild-Whitt, 1979) as is the case with traditional bureaucratic organizations (Michels, 1962).

Research has shown that shifting the focal point of organizational authority to beneficiaries through enhancing their participation provides numerous benefits for the social change agenda. Participatory organizational approaches hold the potential to generate more ideas and greater innovations (Kanter, 1989; Leavitt, 1964:141-50) for effective and adaptive solutions to complex social issues (Sud, VanSandt & Baugous, 2009; Leavitt, 1964:141-50). Indeed, recent research has indicated that people-centered approaches great promise for dealing with the

economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic (Amis & Janz, 2020). Such approaches are dependent on the “collective insight” of employees within organizations and, given an environment of mutual trust, can also harness the shared inputs of stakeholders such as customers, the government, industry competitors and suppliers for developing solutions to mutual problems (Amis & Janz, 2020).

The value of participatory organizations in enabling positive social outcomes as well as their philosophical groundings around empowering workers and communities in contrast to traditional organizational forms are evident from an examination of the extant literature (e.g., Sud, VanSandt & Baugous, 2009). Nevertheless, they risk falling back towards bureaucratic modes of operating in times of both growth and hardship (Kanter, 1989; Rothschild, 1979; Michels, 1962). Even active awareness of the pitfalls and challenges surrounding the pull of bureaucracy is often not enough to avoid falling back into bureaucratic tendencies (Mansbridge, 1983) and prompting a return to the “dominant” system of bureaucracy, authority, and control as encapsulated in Michels’ (1962) classic Iron Law of Oligarchy.

However, additional research has uncovered several contingent factors such as member characteristics, leader motivations, the design of the organization and the configuration of its external organizational environment which can challenge the inevitability of oligarchy (e.g., Jenkins, 1977; Clemens, 1993; Staggenborg, 1988). As an example, Osterman’s (2006) study of a social movement organization identified a culture of contestation between members and professional staff as one of the keys to preserving the democratic character of the organization. Staff engaged in continuous capacity building of members as a means for cultivating this culture by enhancing members’ sense of agency within the organizational system to stave off control (Osterman, 2006).

While such studies and findings offer hope for staving off bureaucracy, this inherent tension between democracy and bureaucratic control has been researched largely in the context of mature democratic organizations with active memberships, established staffing arrangements and robust systems. The research literature has, however, overlooked the early stages in the lifecycle of participatory organizations. Nascent participatory organizations deal with the especially significant—and very different—challenge of generating participation from their employees, members, or beneficiaries in the first place. This challenge becomes particularly acute in scenarios in which beneficiary populations have been deemed as tangential to devising solutions to problems which affect their daily lives (Giridharadas, 2019) and consistently experience mistrust in democratic political processes due to underrepresentation (Wilkes & Wu, 2018). Therefore, without the ability to generate participation in their early stages, participatory organizations will struggle to grow and to realize their core goals and oligarchy might never present itself as a challenge with which they must contend.

In sum, while research to date has been essential for understanding how mature participatory organizations are able to maintain their participatory identity, it has taken for granted the presence of participation and consequently left a key challenge for participatory organizations unexplored. This paper aims to fill this gap by answering the following research question: *How do nascent participatory organizations generate participation from their members?*

In what follows, I focus my review of the literature on participatory organizations and their complicated relationship with oligarchy, highlighting key gaps in the literature regarding how such organizations come to be run by their members and obtain participation in the first place given. My review then focuses on the significance of the early stages in the organizational

lifecycle, in which generating such participation is crucial and which have largely been overlooked in favor of studying mature participatory organizations. I then explain the methods used to conduct the study and present my findings which suggest that four strategies are used to generate member participation—*exercising control*, *balancing authority*, *relinquishing authority* and *extending authority*. The first strategy, counter to the existing literature, uses control to bring about democratic outcomes. The other three strategies function as counterbalancing strategies which make the use of control less overt and more palatable to beneficiaries. I then conclude with a discussion of the theoretical contributions of the findings as well as their limitations and implications for future research.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Participation and Organizational Outcomes

The benefits of employee participation in the context of organizational life include more purposeful work for individuals (Rothschild-Whitt, 1979) and higher morale (Leavitt, 1964:141-50). Democratic participation can also “alter people’s values, the quality of their work, and ultimately, their identities” (Rothschild-Whitt, 1979, pg. 522). Such individual level benefits also correlate with greater organizational productivity (Dachler & Wilpert, 1978) with the benefits of increased employee voice positively influencing job performance (Chamberlin, Newton, & LePine, 2018). The positive outcomes associated with participation have even led organizations to attempt to broaden employee participation through redesigning organizational structures and creating organizational innovations such as self-managed teams (e.g. Young-Hyman, 2017), the use of holocracy as in the infamous case of Zappos and even employee stock ownership plans (ESOPs) designed to extend voice and participation into the economic realm by sharing the financial benefits of an organization with its employees. Turco’s (2016) study of TechCo further found that active promotion of open dialogue used as a means for enabling participation throughout the firm and across hierarchical levels, led to heightened engagement and enhanced capacity for managing organizational change. Even the military—an extreme example of a hierarchical bureaucratic organization—uses participation to create more efficient and effective team practices through after-action reviews and collective reflection (Ashford & DeRue, 2012). Still other organizations are centered around the philosophy of democratic participation as a core defining principle. For example, the Mondragon Corporation—the largest cooperative in the world—enacts their participatory values through practices such as wage ratios approved by

worker-owners through a democratic process to institute wage regulation across all levels of employees from executives to factory workers (Whyte & Whyte, 2014).

Differentiating Participatory and Bureaucratic Organizations

While all organizations can benefit from participation to some degree, there is variation in how central it is to their identity and purpose. Participation and employee control in bureaucratic organizations are ultimately constrained by factors such as structural control (e.g., Rosengren, 1967). Bureaucratic organizations also embrace participation in limited contexts. For example, technical expertise is used by organizations, but only to the extent it is valuable for supporting informed managerial decision-making (Mintzberg, 1979). In other contexts, while participation has been used to improve organizational outcomes, such outcomes function in accordance with high performance strategies that are mainly aligned with employer interests (Mowbray, Wilkinson, & Tse, 2021). In some cases, mechanisms intended to provide avenues for voice ultimately serve to simply curtail grievances (Feuille & Chachere, 1995), quell discontent (Ramsay, 1977; Webster, 1988) or are found to be disingenuous in their efforts (Anner, 2017).

In contrast, participatory organizations, such as Mondragon, are built with the express purpose of being driven by the wishes of their workforce, membership bases or beneficiary groups. Participatory organizations can be characterized as a type of alternative institution. Rothschild-Whitt (1979, pg. 510) defined alternative institutions “in terms of their members' resolve to build organizations which are parallel to, but outside of, established institutions and which fulfill social needs (for education, food, medical aid, etc.) without recourse to bureaucratic authority”. The fundamental vision of participatory organizations is situated in the context of democratic theory in which human capacity in and of itself is seen as an effective basis for “wise

and effective social decision making” which is then further refined through participation in the democratic process itself (Dachler & Wilpert, 1978, pg. 4). Therefore, participatory organizations not only function with entirely different philosophical underpinnings than traditional bureaucratic organizations, but their core purpose is anchored on being able to generate the sustained involvement of their target participant groups. Examples include open-source software communities (O’Mahony & Ferraro, 2007; O’Mahony & Lakhani, 2011), co-op supermarkets (Ashforth & Reingen, 2014), and utopian communities (Kanter, 1989).

Various participatory organizations draw the boundaries of their collectives in different ways. Cooperatives, for example, focus on shared ownership as an animating principle through deriving participation from worker-owners (Ingram & Simons, 2000). Utopian communities focus on gaining participation from their members as a means of obtaining longer-term commitments such as communal living and individual renunciation of mainstream society and social ties (Kanter, 1968). In other cases, participatory organizations are membership-based with non-employee members shaping the direction of the organization, while also benefitting from its services and successes (Osterman, 2006).

All participatory organizations differ from traditional, bureaucratic organizational forms in that the basis of authority is diffused instead of consolidated. “Authority is based in the collectivity as a whole, not the individual” (Rothschild-Whitt, 1979) with the collective having control over its delegation and parameters (e.g., O’Mahony & Ferraro, 2007). As such, participants have control over work products and processes (Rothschild-Whitt, 1979) as opposed to them being dictated by standardization and rules set by leadership (Perrow, 1986). Authority resting with the collective also gives rise to the equitable distribution of labor in which volunteers, staff, and clients are integrated into work roles independent of their particular role

designations (Rothschild-Whitt, 1979). By extension, a diffuse basis of authority implies a diffusion of power amongst such individuals in contrast with the traditional control of organizations being left to leadership or the elite (Michels, 1962).

Such collective institutional forms are not without their downsides, however. High levels of intense loyalty and commitment to organizational ideals might well elicit moral commitment on the part of participants (Etzioni, 1961; Kanter, 1989), but can also result in stress and burnout (Mansbridge, 1980; Rothschild & Whitt, 1986; Swidler, 1979). There is also a cost to widespread participation and flat organizational systems—pace. Such organizations are sometimes viewed as slow-acting compared to the faster-paced decision-making that often takes places within hierarchies. Furthermore, a continual criticism of one type of collective—the community form (e.g. O’Mahony & Ferraro, 2007)—is a lack of effective means for dealing with “power, authority and governance” amongst community members, potential leaders and organizational approaches to governance in a manner which can anchor their participatory agenda (Rothschild & Russell, 1986; Rothschild-Whitt, 1979, 1986).

The conceptions of traditional bureaucratic organizations and alternative institutions can be thought of as ideal types (Doty & Glick, 1994). In practice, many organizations combine aspects of bureaucracy and participation. On the one hand scholars have commented that alternative forms are in fact unobtainable ideals which in reality function as hybrids of democracy and bureaucracy in which there are degrees—not absolutes—of dispersed decision-making power (Rothschild-Whitt, 1979; Tolbert & Hiatt, 2008). Other researchers have made similar claims about the presence of oligarchy within organizations. While Michels’ (1962) classic supposition was that organizations are either oligarchical or non-oligarchical, Tolbert & Hiatt (2009) assert instead that oligarchy manifests as a matter of degree—not as an absolute—

with organizations exhibiting more or less oligarchical tendencies in varying manners. Similarly, research by Martin, Knopoff, and Beckman (1998) as inspired by Perrow's work on control (1986), sought to compare and bring nuance to the differences between traditional bureaucratic organizations, normative organizations, and feminist organizations as three ideal types, the latter of which shares some, but not all characteristics with collectives as envisioned by Rothschild-Whitt (1986) (Martin et al. 1998). The typology itself, however, examines each organizational type across a variety of dimensions such as hierarchy or control, identifying degree to which each manifests within each type as opposed to assuming the complete absence of a particular dimension in the extremes of the traditional and feminist types. Furthermore, O'Mahony & Ferraro (2007) have even found that while bureaucracy and the autonomy of the collective might seem like incompatible bedfellows, they can be complementary under certain circumstances. Their longitudinal study of an open-source software community found that authoritative approaches can coexist with democratic forms to the benefit of a community by providing much-desired structure coupled with trusted leadership to support community efforts over the long-term (O'Mahony & Ferraro, 2007).

Challenges of Participatory Organizations

Given the downsides of collectives and their fundamental hybridity, it is somewhat unsurprising that they are often pulled back into bureaucratic ways of operating—threatening their underlying democratic values—despite their best efforts. Michels (1962) went so far as to claim that the pull towards oligarchy was inevitable with Lipset, Trow, and Coleman (1956: 3) stating that, “oligarchy becomes a problem only in organizations which assume as part of their public value system the absence of oligarchy”. While Michel's claim is not uncontroversial and might also be characterized as extreme, research shows that such challenges are quite real. For

example, Mansbridge (1983) found the ascendance of a dominating elite even despite targeted and purposeful interventions on the part of the organization to prevent such events.

Several studies have, however, identified means by which the inevitability of oligarchy can be mitigated and contingencies under which organizations can be constructed to stave off its effects. As an answer to temptations for leaders to hold on to power for self-aggrandizement, status, or monetary reasons (Michels, 1962), Tolbert & Hiatt (2008) suggested breaking-down leadership into smaller groups or sub-committees such as one might find on boards of directors as a way of dissipating concentrations of power. Research also shows that the culture of organizational leadership can play a large role in protecting against oligarchy (Osterman, 2006; Postmes, Spears and Cihangir, 2001). Polletta's (2002) analysis of participatory democracy in social movement organizations noted the importance of personal relationships and rituals related to discussion and decision-making as components of the culture of an organization which might stave off bureaucratic tendencies. Furthermore, pre-existing high status and skills on the part of participants can stave off the pull of oligarchy as it did in the case of union workers (Lipset et al. 1956) and women in turn of the century women's groups (Clemens, 1993), allowing them to be above the fray of the political establishment within the organization and less likely to maintain internal power for personal gain. In another case, members' "relentlessly voiced refusal" of the divide between leaders and members coupled with the use of "schoolboy humor" contributed towards keeping organizational leaders in check (Jaumier, 2017). In line with these findings, Osterman (2006) advanced that—while oligarchy might not be avoidable—if an organization builds a "sense of agency" amongst its members along with maintaining a culture of contestation that encourages the use of such agency for members to push back against organizational leadership, the negative effects of oligarchy can be avoided.

It is clear then that the difficulties presented by oligarchy in the context of participatory organizations can be mitigated. However, safeguarding the democratic character of such organizations will nevertheless remain an ever-present challenge—one which the research literature has concerned itself with studying at length. In doing so, however, the literature has overlooked—even taken for granted—how the democratic character of such participatory organizations comes to be in the first place. The central component of participatory organizations and their democratic agenda is, by definition, participation. Oligarchy presupposes democracy and democracy presupposes participation. Without participation such organizations cannot come to be thought of as participatory nor can they claim to adhere to democratic values, nor even can they experience the ensuing challenges of oligarchy.

Political theorist Pateman (1970: 42) concluded that “people really do learn to participate through the process of participation itself”. “Practice” has also been noted as a critical element of success for member proficiency in refining participatory methods and sharpening the moral-leanings of such organizations towards democracy (Rothschild, 2016). Chen’s 2016 study of how the Burning Man event scaled from a small group of friends in 1986 to over 60,000 participants by 2014 provides compelling support for the value of practicing participation in order to generate participation. Her findings offer insights into the actions taken by event organizers in order to obtain sustained participation overtime. For example, organizers place creative control in the hands of members to plan whatever they would like at the annual event even if such efforts were duplicative such as multiple radio stations webcasting the event simultaneously. This allows volunteer work to be valued in and of itself instead of as something to be managed. Storytelling is then used as a means of conveying the moral messages associated with the event that organizers hope participants will take back into their daily lives. While this study offers valuable

insights, it examines a unique type of participatory organization in which participation is centered around the excitement of a yearly event as opposed to unpacking the mechanisms by which member participation might be generated and sustained on a regular basis.

Research has also largely chronicled barriers to participation (as opposed to those leading to its achievement), including the surprising inadequacy of democratic structures and processes for generating participation such as democratic organizing structures and spaces for members to gather (Varman & Chakrabarti, 2004) as well as consensus-based decision-making procedures (Brown, 1985). Some scholars have as a result concluded that creating cultures of solidarity and participation (Hernandez, 2006) in which all members are comfortable voicing—and more importantly critiquing—the status quo are essential components of an active membership (Varman & Chakrabarti, 2004; Osterman, 2006). However, such studies do not investigate the microprocesses leading to the development of such cultures or, in the case of Osterman (2006), focus on avoiding the loss of participation by warding off oligarchy instead of on how participation is proactively generated.

Leach (2016) found that reducing role rigidity empowered member participation in decision-making forums and enkindled greater responsibility for members to be open to and accepting of the perspectives of other members within the collective. These findings as well as Chen's (2016) study of the organization behind the Burning Man event offer valuable insights into discrete factors leading to increased participation. However, both studies as well as Osterman (2006) represent mature participatory organizations in which beneficiaries, employees or members are already engaged in the continual practice of participation per Pateman (1970) and Rothschild (2016). This then leaves the lingering question of how participatory organizations might generate participation in their early stages in which they must not only contend with the

ever-present threat of oligarchy, but also with the lack of organizational spaces and opportunities for systemic engagement for their members to fully embrace participation.

The early stages in any organization's lifecycle are significant. Literature on entrepreneurship has widely recognized the "liability of newness" that nascent organizations suffer from, placing them at much greater risk of failure than their more mature counterparts (Stinchcombe, 1965). New ventures struggle with identities which are not fully formed (Santos & Eisenhardt, 2009) and the need for establishing legitimacy with key audiences (e.g., Suchman, 1995; Lounsbury & Glynn, 2001). They also must deal with the weight of decisions made during their early stages such as organizational structures which become "imprinted" and persist overtime (Stinchcombe, 1965), constraints which initial holders of particular functional roles create for subsequent employees (Burton & Beckman, 2007), and the logics held by founders which form blueprints and have longstanding implications for firms as they grow (Baron, Burton & Hannan, 1999).

It is also during this time that organizations exhibit an idealistic commitment to organizational ideals and values as a needed component of their sustainability (Kanter, 1989). In the case of participatory organizations this relates to building their democratic character and establishing their target participant group as the central authority within the organizational system as a means for ensuring the legitimacy and relevance of the organization to their desired participants in order to bring about the social change they envision. Early-stage organizations also acutely experience both organizational growth as well as periods of intense difficulty—both of which have been found as factors that might give rise to oligarchic tendencies (Michels, 1962). Furthermore, while participatory organizations essentially aspire to be run by their beneficiaries, in their early stages they must by necessity be built by founders, early-stage leaders

and professional staff, making the tension surrounding a potential shift in authority away from core participants even more perilous.

My research examines this unique period in the development of participatory organizations to understand how they go about generating participation and dealing with its associated challenges at a time when their democratic character is not yet fully formed. I focus on the microprocesses in the relationship between professional staff and participants which underly such dynamics, providing greater depth to our understanding of participatory organizations, collectives and their inherent tensions with bureaucracy, authority, and control.

METHODS

This study utilizes an inductive, single-case research design appropriate for studying unexplained phenomena (Edmondson & McManus, 2007; Pratt, 2009) such as early-stage participatory organizations. The single-case study method is also appropriate for a focus on the in-depth dynamics within particular settings (Eisenhardt, 1989), which is highly appropriate for uncovering the microprocesses at the core of how early-stage organizations—specifically their professional staff and leaders—generate participation from their target groups.

The Boston Ujima Project (“Ujima”) as a research context allows for an in-depth examination into the early stages in the construction of a participatory organization anchored on principles of collective, democratic decision-making and economic democracy. For the purposes of this research it is not being treated or viewed as a success case. Ujima simply offers a setting with which to explore the research question at hand and draw conclusions about the processes and mechanisms underlying attempts to generate participation in the context of nascent participatory organizations. Furthermore, Ujima’s target beneficiary population—people of color and working-class individuals within three of Boston’s most underserved communities—also characterize the site as “extreme” (Yin, 2003). Staff inferred engaging such populations in participatory processes to be acutely challenging given the high degree of existing mistrust between minority populations and democratic systems at the national-level due to longstanding demographic underrepresentation (Wilkes & Wu, 2018) as well as marginalization at the hands of nonprofits and other social sector organizations making decisions on behalf of such communities as opposed to placing them at the forefront of decision-making (Giridharadas, 2019; INCITE!, 2017).

Research Setting

Ujima is a non-profit membership organization with the goal of closing the racial wealth divide in Boston by establishing a “community-controlled economy” in three of Boston’s most underserved neighborhoods—Roxbury, Dorchester, and Mattapan. Ujima operates an investment fund that takes in money from community members and other individual investors as well as institutional investors such as foundations or local institutions in the Boston area. The fund invests in businesses within Roxbury, Dorchester and Mattapan as decided by Ujima’s working class members and members of color. Ujima uses a capital investment fund as its key mechanism for enacting economic democracy and its member-based approach as its means for enacting participatory democracy for the purposes of constructing an economy invested in and controlled by working class individuals and people of color in their target communities. Ujima is therefore anchored by two types of values—its end-state racial justice values, which are associated with its overarching mission to close the racial wealth divide in Boston, and its participatory or democratic values, which function as the means by which its end-state values are achieved.

Ujima supports its work through drawing on a multitude of external stakeholder relationships with local institutions anchored in the Boston community such as hospitals, universities and faith-based groups, a collection of neighborhood businesses included in Ujima’s business alliance as well as grassroots organizations active within Roxbury, Dorchester, and Mattapan. Such relationships form the basis of what Ujima refers to as its “ecosystem approach” which serves to ground the organization within the local community for a variety of purposes such as securing investments in the capital investment fund and assisting Ujima businesses with gaining contracts and securing clients. As such, Ujima’s ecosystem of external relationships also serves as a de-risking strategy for the investment fund and as a means of increasing its visibility in order to attract new members.

Ujima's organizational approach sits at the intersection of social impact investing, community organizing and activism and local economic development, employing tactics, tools, and approaches from all three organizational types in its work. Ujima receives operational funding from private individual donors and also charges membership fees, but is primarily a grant-funded institution receiving support from foundations. There is no intention for investment funds to cover administrative costs for the organization given its nonprofit status and the purposeful design of the fund to be used entirely at the discretion of member interests within Ujima's target communities.

Organizational History. Prototyping and development of Ujima and its ecosystem approach lasted from 2014 to 2016. The Ujima model was designed by a study group of approximately 40 individuals from various industry sectors across Boston including impact investing, grassroots organizations and nonprofits, and community activists and organizers. The group was convened by Ujima's founder and began by exploring various models for community finance and economic development with its work culminating in a concept paper of Ujima's organizational structures and design.

Ujima originally received its fiscal sponsorship from CityLife/Vida Urbana, a well-known grassroots organization in Roxbury whose members were involved in the initial study group. In 2018 it became a program of the Center for Economic Democracy (CED) a nonprofit organization founded by the same individual as Ujima. While the original intent was for Ujima to be an independent, legally registered 501c3 nonprofit, this has not been possible to date due to various legal, financial, and operational complications regarding backend support for the Ujima capital fund. When my fieldwork ended it was still the intent for Ujima to eventually have independent 501c3 status separate from CED although no specific timeline had been set for that.

Ujima’s first external hire—its director—was in 2016. Ujima opened for membership in 2017 and launched its capital fund at the end of 2018. When fieldwork ended at the end of August 2019, Ujima had approximately 400 members and employed 3 full-time staff, 1 full-time student fellow and 3 part-time staff. Staff included a director, fund manager and a communications organizer with the student fellow serving as fund associate. Part-time staff consisted of a human resources and finance administrator—a position shared with CED—and an investment advisor. The Ujima founder also worked part-time on Ujima while also supporting the work of CED.

By August 2019, Ujima had raised nearly \$1 million towards its \$5 million investment fund and was in the process of determining the first business to receive a capital investment from the fund. See Table 1 for a historical breakdown of Ujima’s key milestones.

Insert Table 1

Membership base. Ujima members are the core of its participatory democracy agenda and of Ujima as a whole. Ujima has two membership types—voting members and solidarity members. Voting members are working class individuals or people of color who live in Roxbury, Dorchester, or Mattapan as well as people of color living anywhere in Boston. Solidarity members are any other individuals within Boston who wish to join Ujima. Ujima’s membership types serve as a signal of its purpose in elevating the voices of working-class individuals and people of color as individuals who are able to vote on investments, while other members stand in solidarity with voting members and their investment decisions. Ujima’s membership types and

their associated rights within the Ujima system underscore the reparations philosophy which underlies Ujima's approach.

Anyone can sign-up to be an Ujima member via Ujima's website or by attending any type of Ujima meeting or event and registering in person. Members self-identify as voting or solidarity members (criteria are listed on Ujima's website and membership registration form). All members pay dues of \$25 with students paying \$5.

Member organizing structures. Three organizational structures—weekly member meetings, member teams, and neighborhood assemblies—serve as the main spaces in which members gather to make decisions, connect with one another and with staff, and engage in collective learning. These spaces are open to both Ujima members as well as anyone who is interested in learning about Ujima's work.

Weekly member meetings are held every Wednesday from 6-8:30pm and are divided into two parts. The first part of every weekly member meeting is called “co-learn” in reference to members and staff learning collectively about a topic that members have raised as being important to the community. The second part of every member meeting is called “co-create” during which Ujima's member teams meet on a rotating basis. Ujima had a total of 10 member teams by the time I left the field in August 2019. The purpose of the member teams is for Ujima members to meet regularly to lead and make strategic decisions concerning each of the various aspects of Ujima's ecosystem and its work with the community. One example is the Timebank Member Team, which is responsible for envisioning, building, maintaining, and generating member participation in the Ujima timebank—a system of nonmonetary exchange of goods and services amongst Ujima members—which is a key component of its economic democracy agenda. Each member team relates to a key aspect of the Ujima ecosystem (e.g. Timebank

Member Team, Anchor Institutions Member Team) or an outward-facing element of Ujima's work with the community (e.g. Investment Outreach Member Team, Arts & Culture Member Team). Agendas for member team meetings are set by members or in a minority of cases by staff serving in coordinating roles. Each member team meets once a month, meaning two or three member teams meet simultaneously each week during the second portion of the weekly meeting. Members are together in one room for the first portion of the weekly meetings and then split into separate groups for each member team to meet during the second half of the meeting.

Neighborhood assemblies are held within each neighborhood and also citywide at various times to convene members for particular purposes. For example, in 2018 assemblies were held within each neighborhood to identify businesses participants "loved" (e.g. a catering company beloved by the community and owned by a female person of color in need of capital to scale), "needed" (e.g., a daycare in Dorchester) and wanted to be "replaced" (e.g., check cashing businesses) within each community. The list of businesses "loved" informed staff on which businesses they should reach out to as potential investments and the list of needs informed topics discussed during the "co-learning" portion of the weekly member meeting.

Investment fund. Ujima's investment fund is the central component of its economic democracy agenda and the backbone of its "community-controlled economy". All members can invest in the fund with an investment threshold as low as \$50 (for working class individuals). Voting members collectively determine which businesses Roxbury, Dorchester and Mattapan receive capital investments through a democratic voting process. Ballots are sent out to all members for online voting, but members can also vote in-person at weekly member meetings or at neighborhood assemblies that coincide with an open vote and also via phone. Voting does not occur on a set schedule, but rather when potential investments are ready for voting by members.

While the fund also receives investments from institutional investors, foundations and non-members across various races and classes, its decision-making authority rests solely with voting members, creating a closed-loop, community-controlled economy within Boston's most marginalized communities.

Ujima further reinforces the democratic character of its investment fund by placing a cap of \$250k on any single investment from any individual or institution within the \$5 million fund, preferring instead to receive smaller investments from a multitude of investors as to not disrupt the perceived balance of power amongst investors in the direction of a few larger investors. Additionally, in contrast to traditional venture funds, Ujima's fund utilizes a "reverse capital stack" which privileges working class individuals with higher rates of return and also as the first to receive repayments for any investment losses the fund might incur. As of when I left the field there was no cap designated for the size of investments that could be made to a single recipient.

The fund is not registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) nor is it insured by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC). In regulatory matters it is covered by the Philanthropy Protection Act and is exempt from the provisions of federal and many state securities (see page 52, Ujima Offering Memorandum). As stated in the Ujima Offering Memorandum (page 5), "[investment] notes are intended for investors whose primary motivation is charitable...Although the notes will bear interest and will be repayable at maturity, the proceeds of the notes will be used for charitable purposes, and the rates of interest payable on the notes may be less than market rates".

External stakeholders. Ujima's strategy for engaging external stakeholders as part of its "ecosystem approach" serves to support its membership base and its capital fund by grounding Ujima within the broader Boston community. For example, Ujima aims to draw in citywide

institutions like universities, hospitals, and faith-based organizations as potential investors in the capital fund as well as potential clients for businesses receiving investments from Ujima. Such institutions are often referred to as ‘anchor institutions’ by the nonprofit sector as they are long-lasting, stable institutions within particular geographic locations with great potential for contributing to and impacting local economies. Ujima mobilizes their support both as potential new clients for Ujima businesses as well as in the capacity of investors in the Ujima fund both of which serve as signals of commitment from anchor institutions to the local community and specifically minority-owned businesses. In part due to the work of Ujima’s Anchor Institutions Member Team, anchor institutions had invested approximately \$80,000 in the Ujima fund by the time fieldwork concluded in August 2019. Additionally, one of the members of Ujima’s business alliance—which would later become its first investment—had secured a contract with one of the largest hospitals in Boston.

Ujima’s business alliance is another part of the Ujima ecosystem. The business alliance includes all businesses receiving investments from the Ujima fund as well as other businesses in Ujima’s target communities that wish to apply for admission. All members of the business alliance must meet or be working towards meeting Ujima’s 36 member-developed community standards such as being 51% or more owned by people of color or paying a living wage.

Ujima’s ecosystem also includes grassroots partners ranging from nonprofits to community organizations and activist groups embedded within its target communities which provide connections for Ujima to potential members and knowledge about local businesses while creating a network of mutual support across the city. Ujima often co-hosts events, engages in staff-sharing, and also shares meeting space with its grassroots partners. While Ujima does engage numerous external stakeholders as part of its “ecosystem approach” such stakeholders do

not retain voting rights as organizations. Those affiliated with or employed by Ujima's stakeholders may become members if they wish and if they meet the criteria for solidarity or voting membership. However, their membership would be as individuals, not as representatives of their organizations.

Collectively, Ujima's "ecosystem approach" serves as a means for mitigating risks associated with investing in the Ujima investment fund by grounding Ujima in the local community through a web of external stakeholder relationships which serve to support Ujima's businesses, serve as potential investors for the investment fund, and as potential avenues for Ujima to gain visibility and increase its membership.

Ujima and CED. CED was initially founded in 2012 as the Economic Justice Funding Circle (EJFC) providing grants to support racial and economic justice organizing within Boston. EJFC changed its name to the Center for Economic Democracy in 2014 to reflect a broader mission for supporting the economic democracy movement within Boston and across the United States.

The study group which originally developed the conceptual approach for Ujima was convened under the auspices of CED in 2014 to specifically explore different options for community-controlled investing vehicles. As the idea for Ujima progressed, its initial fiscal sponsorship came from City Life/Vida Urbana one of the main grassroots organizations involved in the study group. It was originally envisioned that Ujima would then become an independent legal entity and would outsource the backend management of the fund to another organization with a track record for fund management. After nearly a year of planning along these lines, it was determined that, due to a series of legal and regulatory issues, this would not be possible. This led CED to obtain its 501c3 to be able to bring Ujima under its auspices. It is still the ongoing vision for Ujima to be a separate legal entity at some point in the future.

Ujima is a legal program of CED, but internally the organizations manage and view themselves as separate entities and have become increasingly independent. The original CED 501c3 application included significant delegations of authority and power from the CED board of directors to other Ujima entities such as its Investment Committee in order to enable Ujima to operate as independently as possible. There are also plans for Ujima to elect its own board of directors from its membership base. The CED board functions more as a passive approver of Ujima's work than an active overseer. Both organizations receive separate grant funding from various foundations and have longer-term visions for earned revenue strategies.

CED began hiring permanent staff in 2018 once it received its nonprofit status. Until 2018 the founder was the sole employee of CED and often served in an unpaid capacity as he was developing the positioning for the organization and getting it off the ground. While the founder still spends a percentage of his time on both Ujima and CED, the two organizations employ different staff members with the exception of a human resource/finance administrator which they both share. The two organizations are co-located and share office space, making the relationship between staff very collegial and supportive. While Ujima has its own director and functions independently in an operational capacity from CED on a day-to-day basis, the founder remains involved given the wealth of his relationships across the Boston organizing community and his status in the impact investing community pre-dating his work at CED. However, while the founder is involved for strategic purposes in building-up the work of Ujima, as one staff member commented, “[the founder] does defer to [the director], though, because she’s the director and he’s very respectful of that”.

CED has two main programs—Ujima and the Solidarity Economy Initiative (SEI). Unlike Ujima which is managed by its own staff and functions as a separate operational entity

from CED, SEI is managed by CED staff. Ujima is described on the CED website as it relates to CED's mission to support the new economy building movement across the US. CED accomplishes its mission by running their own programs (as with SEI), functioning as an incubator (as with Ujima), or providing funding or technical assistance support to outside organizations to fuel their work to support the movement. Therefore, Ujima's increased independence as an organization and their success is a sign of CED's ability to support the new economy building movement. As such, Ujima's branding is entirely separate from CED as CED's work does not relate to Ujima's day-to-day operational work in any meaningful way. The relationship between the two organizations is mainly in relation to fiscal sponsorship, staff-share arrangements, shared working space as well as co-hosting of events from time to time as is common in the Boston activist community across grassroots and activist organizations.

From attending Ujima weekly member meetings, it is my impression that Ujima members may or may not be aware of CED as an organization nor the history between the two organizations unless they were involved from the early days of Ujima or have knowledge of activist community in Boston. From interviews with CED staff it was clear that while there was an overall sense of what Ujima did, staff did not have detailed operational knowledge of Ujima on a daily basis nor were they necessarily present at regular Ujima events. The separation between the organizations became even more apparent in their internal management of staff with Ujima's director and CED's managing director employing unique styles and developing distinct cultures for each organization after having explicit conversations with the founder about whether or not to create a holistic culture, management style and identity for both organizations.

Access and Data Collection

I met the Ujima founder and fund manager at a conference on social impact investing in the summer of 2018. After a number of subsequent conversations throughout the fall, I was granted access to begin fieldwork in January of 2019. After this initial trip I proposed following Ujima for a period of 18 months which would cover the initial period of their fund launch, tracking both investments made in the fund as well as the disbursement of capital to businesses. I proposed working for Ujima in a volunteer capacity for the entire summer of 2019 and being based in Boston so that as I collected my data I could also be of service to the organization. This proposal was met with resistance. Staff expressed concerns that their members might feel “watched” by a researcher. They also felt that my proposal to embed myself within the organization as a volunteer would not be useful to them and that they wanted to reserve such positions primarily for people of color in alignment with Ujima’s organizational goals. Staff also shared that because they felt the organization was still in a “start-up” phase it would be too much effort on their part to have a third party involved in a research capacity on a regular basis. They agreed to let the project proceed, given the initial promises that were made in the fall, but access was restricted in two ways. First, we agreed that field work would only happen during certain periods of time that would be less hectic for staff. Second, in order to be respectful of the wishes and concerns of the organization, it was decided that I would not engage in formal semi-structured interviews with members or investors.

I returned to the field in June of 2019. At the end of that trip, I proposed returning to the field for most of the month of August, which did not receive any resistance. I interacted freely with staff and members and also attended a wide array of internal and external meetings and events throughout my time in the field on all trips. While I did not formally interview members, I had informal interactions and conversations with approximately 45 members, including more

than one interaction with 8 members and in-depth conversations with 4 members—many without staff being present—throughout the course of my fieldwork, which provided valuable, in-the-moment perspectives on Ujima and their work. Additionally, the concerns Ujima raised about “feeling watched” seemed to fade during the second trip in June. As I spent more time in the field in August, it was even easier to be embedded in the regular flow of their work.

In sum, data collection occurred from January to August of 2019. This was a crucial period of time for two reasons. 2019 was the first year during which both the Ujima fund and the membership body were simultaneously active, allowing the in-depth case study to take place as Ujima’s key mechanisms for economic and participatory democracy unfolded and took shape. Furthermore, when I entered the field in January 2019 staff stated that Ujima’s Board of Directors—to be elected by and made up entirely of its members—was projected to be in place by the end of the year. Therefore, the time period during which research took place not only encapsulated an early stage in the development of a participatory organization, but also an acute period during which the relationship between professional staff and members—often the key protagonists within participatory organizations—was the crucial relationship for determining how the organization would manage to safeguard its participatory approach and manage its ensuing dilemmas and opportunities. Therefore, Ujima as the research setting as well as the timeframe of the research engagement provide an ideal context within which to investigate my research questions.

Data consist of semi-structured interviews and observations. I used multiple avenues for data collection to allow for triangulation of findings for greater theoretical reliability (Adler & Adler, 1994).

Interviews. I conducted a total of 20 semi-structured interviews across my three trips to the field from January to August 2019 (see Table 2). I conducted two to three rounds of interviews with all full-time and part-time Ujima staff as well as some staff of Ujima’s current fiscal sponsor, CED. The range of interview subjects allowed me to gain a full perspective on Ujima’s work from staff at all levels and across multiple positions (see Table 2).

Insert Table 2

The use of interviews as a methodological tool was essential for engaging in specific lines of questioning relevant to the study and gaining access to past experiences and internal states of interviewees not accessible through the use of observation alone (Creswell, 2014).

Interviews lasted between 30 minutes to over 2 hours. Initial interview topics included perceived success, challenges, milestones to date as well as areas of focus and potential challenges for the future, and staff perceptions about the organization’s core values and mission. I also asked questions about staff roles and responsibilities, why and how they came to work at Ujima as well as hiring practices of the organization. I then asked follow-up questions during interviews to probe more deeply into relevant or interesting topics as they emerged in order to gain deeper insight into participatory mechanisms and insights into how staff and members related. I recorded and transcribed all interviews for coding and analysis. I wrote memos following each interview and at the end of each day in the field. This allowed me to identify salient topics as well as to easily track conversations with each respondent over the course of my time in the field.

Observation. I collected observational data throughout a total of 20 days in the field from January to August 2019 for a total of 123 hours of observation. During this time, I attended 11 internal staff meetings, five weekly Ujima member meetings, five member team meetings, and six external events hosted or attended by Ujima (see Table 2). While in the field I occupied a cubicle at the organization’s headquarters. The floorplan layout is open concept with all staff—including the director and founder—occupying cubicle space. I was therefore able to engage in both informal conversations with staff and observations of staff interactions on a regular basis. This aided me in understanding the organization in greater depth and supplemented more official interviews and meeting observations. In one instance I also engaged in participant observation when I worked alongside Ujima employees and members to staff a booth on behalf of Ujima at an arts and community event hosted by one of the members of its business alliance. This afforded a deeper understanding into Ujima’s processes as well as a perspective on how individuals not familiar with Ujima reacted to the organization as they would approach the table and ask for information about Ujima. I helped with setting up the table, staffing it along with other employees and members, and taking down the materials at the end of the festival. I observed staff and members interacting with people as they approached the table, engaged in conversations with staff and members throughout the festival, assisted with a variety of logistical tasks to be of assistance to staff and members, and also interacted with individuals who would approach the table interested in learning more about Ujima. Questions I received were usually related to basic organizational information regarding organizational purpose, logistics about weekly member meetings and information about the Ujima capital fund. I responded by answering questions to the best of my abilities, provided interested parties with organizational materials available for distribution at the table and also deferred to staff and members on

questions or topics on which I was not well versed. The exchanges were mostly factual in nature, although some individuals who lingered to speak longer asked if I was a member of Ujima or a staff member at which point I shared that I was a researcher working with Ujima. If asked, I shared my research interests and the connection to working with Ujima, which most were intrigued by.

Data Analysis

I utilized a grounded theory approach, iterating between patterns in the data and the research literature to develop the empirical findings and generate novel theoretical insights in order to contribute meaningfully towards the academic literature (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). My process consisted of four main stages.

It became very evident during my initial field visit in January 2019 that Ujima was indeed a suitable site in which to explore my research questions regarding early-stage participatory organizations. Based on memo writing and coding and analysis of interviews and observational data I inductively surfaced that the organization continually made decisions in which members' needs were placed first and their input solicited on operational matters (e.g., suggestions for socially responsible retirement funds) that staff might handle exclusively in a more traditional organizational setting. I characterized this as a "members first" paradigm in which members were prioritized as the key informants of staff decision-making processes. This theme was affirmed through the use of member checks and peer debriefings via feedback received from staff on a report I submitted to the organization following the initial field engagement which summarized key emerging themes, including the "members first" paradigm (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Kirk & Miller, 1986). These early-stage findings, in addition to my knowledge of extant literature regarding challenges faced by mature democratic organizational

forms due to the countervailing forces of bureaucracy, affirmed my focus on the construction of participatory organizations and an examination of the challenges they might encounter in their early stages when trying to navigate the clutches of bureaucracy and gain the participation essential to their success.

Data analysis after I exited the field was comprised of three key stages. First, a detailed timeline of organizational events was constructed which assisted with understanding the flow of decisions and actions that took place from the beginnings of Ujima (pre-data collection) until I departed the field in August 2019. From this I identified an extreme case in which the organization sought, but struggled, to obtain participation from its members. This case involved Ujima's voting process—the backbone of its democratic approach towards decision-making—in which members vote on key decisions related to the operations of the organization such as investments and investment-related topics. The extreme case involved a vote expected to take two weeks, instead lasting for five months due to low voter turnout on the part of members. Through coding and analysis of observational data and interviews from this event I found that the organization utilized tactics and interventions which resembled aspects of bureaucratic control in order to gain the participation needed.

With the outputs of the data analysis process from the first stage, I went back to the literature on participatory organizations. I found that the main distinguishing feature of participatory organizations—as opposed to bureaucratic—is that the center of authority resides amongst participants as opposed to leaders, staff, or experts (Rothschild-Whitt, 1986). I also simultaneously reviewed field memos in which I noted that staff and members seemed to engage in what I thought of as a “push-push back dynamic” in which authority from each party was

expressed through statements or desires which the other party responded to by acquiescing or pushing against using the authority of the other part.

This led to the next stage in my data analysis in which I returned to my data and coded in detail all interactions between staff and members across all interview and observational data to determine how authority shifted between the two groups as they interacted. I developed coding categories inductively and refined them as I analyzed my data (Charmaz, 2001). I initially created categories using both the initial source of the authority (e.g., members or staff) as well as the nature of the response provided by the other party. For example, a request on the part of staff met with acquiescence on the part of members was coded as “staff push—members own”. Initial coding identified 15 different configurations of such member-staff interactions. Once the initial categories were created, I then collapsed and refined them further to surface the strategies described in the findings section and their associated theoretical implications for the different ways in which members and staff interact to further Ujima’s participatory agenda.

FINDINGS

Staff use four strategies to increase member participation—*exercising control*, *balancing authority*, *relinquishing authority*, and *extending authority*. Counterintuitively, the first strategy—*exercising control*—uses control to generate member participation in the context of a participatory organization based on democratic principles. The latter three strategies do not use control as their modus operandi. They instead function as counterbalancing strategies which allow for the use of control to be experienced as less overt, more palatable and, therefore effective.

The findings section is divided into four parts. The first part is dedicated to an overview of definitions of authority and control in the context of this research. The second part is dedicated to the *exercising control* strategy in which control is used to generate participation. The third part discusses how the remaining strategies—*balancing authority*, *relinquishing authority*, and *extending authority*—function to counterbalance the use of control. The fourth part addresses the implications of all four strategies for generating participatory outcomes across the entire organization.

I. Defining Authority and Control

I ground my research findings in longstanding definitions of authority and control in the academic literature. I am informed by Weber's (1978) widely used conceptualizations of authority in which staff and members draw their legitimacy for action from rational-legal authority. Rational-legal authority is often viewed as the hallmark of modern democracies in which authority resides within a position that an individual holds by virtue of certain rules mutually agreed upon by members of a particular group or institution (Weber, 1978). Ujima members are granted authority to lead the organization through member teams, voting and other

structures and processes by virtue of both the explicitly defined goals and mission of the organization as well as the underlying principles of participatory organizations in which authority is based with the collective (Rothschild-Whitt, 1979). Simultaneously, however, many participatory organizations have professional staff, as is the case with Ujima. Staff also maintain rational-legal authority for managing the operations of the organization and in the early stages of an organization—by necessity—maintain the legitimacy to build the organization and mobilize members in order for its participatory goals to become a reality. As such, rational-legal authority, especially in the early stages of participatory organizations, reflects a delicate balance between two key constituencies—staff and members. All four strategies maintain various configurations of authority between members and staff: shared authority between members and staff (*balancing authority* and *extending authority*), transferring of authority by staff to members (*relinquishing authority*), or in the case of *exercising control*, authority which is held unilaterally in the hands of staff (see Table 3).

Insert Table 3

I draw from Davis (1951) and Goetz (1949) to inform my use of control in this study. Goetz (1949) very succinctly stated that “control consists of securing conformity to plans” with Davis (1951) adding nuance to this sentiment by referring to control as “constraining and regulating action...for the accomplishment of an objective”. Both definitions capture how staff use control in the context of the *exercising control* strategy to accomplish their objective of generating member participation by attempting to regulate, even constrain, member actions. Also

in the context of this strategy authority is held and maintained unilaterally by staff in their efforts to “secure compliance” from members as related to their participation-building agenda.

While all four strategies have differ in their configurations of authority and only one uses control, they yet maintain the following core components: tactics which staff use to enact their authority, the complementary presence of emotions as authority is discharged tactics are enacted, and subsequent implications for generating participation and for safeguarding organizational values (see Table 3).

II. Exercising Control

Staff use control when they believe the values of the organization are at stake. Ujima has two types of values—end-state racial justice values as well as participatory values which function as the means by which its end-state values are achieved. While *exercising control* concerns itself with both sets of values, its primary focus is on the end-state racial justice values of the organization. It is also the only strategy of the four that relates to end-state organizational values.

The use of control, therefore, functions to increase member participation in the community-facing work of the organization as well as to uphold Ujima’s end-state racial justice values as its main “objectives” (see Davis, 1951). Control comes about through the mutually reinforcing relationships between authority and emotions, emotions and values, and values and authority (see Figure 1).

Insert Figure 1

Authority. Authority within the *exercising control* strategy is held and exercised exclusively by staff and is enacted through the use of four tactics: one-on-one appeals, values proclamations, procedural adjustments and claims of success (see Table 4).

Insert Table 4

One-on-one appeals function as overtures used to obtain participation from specific individuals or to shift the nature of a specific individual’s participation in order to serve the organization’s overall goals more effectively. The most prominent example of one-on-one appeals is during Ujima’s Spring 2019 vote, which was expected to last three weeks and instead took approximately five months before the needed member votes were obtained. Staff used a multitude of interventions during this timeframe to attempt to increase voter turnout, but ultimately concluded that “one-on-one outreach is the only thing that’s working right now for the voting.”

Staff engage in *values proclamations* as a means of conveying their commitment to the organization’s participatory values. One such instance is related to one of the ballots for the spring 2019 vote.

So with voting to ratify the community standards specifically there was some talk about to what extent we needed to reach quorum, because they had been created by the community standards committee and the community standards committee had been voted on by Ujima membership and we had created...co-created the standards with Ujima members during our last assembly...The reason it came up was that we knew how hard it was going to be to get people to engage in the vote over the timeline that we had, but we...it was kind of like a, something that when it was said, it was like 'oh, that's so clearly out of line with what we are doing that we can't do that' [not have members vote]. So, I guess we kind of radically committed to sort of the integrity of our processes, even though it might be more convenient to not be. (Interviewee 1, Interview 2)

Procedural adjustments entail changes to Ujima’s organizational procedures or processes that are initiated by staff and serve as a departure from originally defined pieces of the Ujima infrastructure that were to reinforce certain core aspects of the organization such as voting and the identification of business for potential investment by the community. Staff believe such procedural adjustments are in the best interest of the functioning of the entire organization. In some cases staff consult members on these changes and in some cases they do not. In one instance in which members were not consulted, staff changed the voting process to allow members the option to abstain from voting in an effort to reduce barriers to member participation in response to low voting member participation in the spring 2019 voting process.

Staff make *claims of success* that in some ways overstate the reality of the organization in order to elicit greater participation from members and enhance member confidence that what Ujima has promised—a community-controlled economy by working class people of color in Boston—is in fact possible. To this effect, staff proclaim the following in the Ujima newsletter at the end of 2019.

The Ujima fund makes its first investment [in a composting cooperative] in November 2019 after a three-week voting period, releasing the following statement as part of a year-end email to their membership: “One hundred forty-five Boston residents -- of whom, more than eighty percent identify as Black, Indigenous/Native, Latinx, Asian, Pacific Islander, Middle Eastern or Northern African, Mixed Race, or Person of Color -- had their say. They decided on the direct, positive impacts they wanted to see in their neighborhoods. And what they decided, collectively, has happened, is happening. This is happening, this process cannot be undone. An expectation has been set. It is now a permanent part of our shared story. A new normal is here.” (archival data, Dec 2019 Ujima newsletter, subject line “A New Normal is Here”)

Values. Staff exercise control as a means of expressing their determination to increase member participation and when means and end-state values are at stake. However, the underlying dedication of staff to the values of the organization is what produces such strong

determination to defend such values in the first place. The following incident is exemplary of this mutually reinforcing relationship.

We do spend a lot of energy thinking about how to, because it's a multi-racial, multi-class project, how do you deal with folks with more privilege and power. So in our last assembly we did this skit about how we wanted white folks to engage with people of color in this space because in the assembly before some people were really triggered by how some people were acting in the space. So we were like we've heard about it, let's address this upfront and like not dance around it, but name it and try to lean-into it. (Interviewee 7, Interview 1)

The devotion of staff to the racial justice values of the organization leads to the unabashed use of staff authority to two ends—one, to ensure members fully internalize the organization's racial justice values, and second, to set organizational norms to safeguard the organization's racial justice values (see Table 5).

Insert Table 5

While the tactics of *exercising control* serve as the functional mechanisms which staff use to enact their authority in order to increase member participation in a more explicit manner on a day-to-day basis, the devotion of staff to their end-state values serves to increase participation in a more implicit manner as the interventions and decisions staff undertake have the resulting effect of putting on display their adherence to the end-state values of the organization (see Table 5).

For example, staff take particular actions to show voting members they are valued and staff are committed to them as was the case with the Spring 2019 vote in which staff chose to delay the progress of the organization until the required 51% voting quorum was obtained from voting members.

Umm, so, a huge part of Ujima is about practicing the democracy. We were just talking about, in the meeting last week about the fact that if people, if we don't get 51% quorum on this vote, around the bank, [the director's] just going to tell everybody we can't do anything, because you didn't vote and having people be like 'oh, my vote actually mattered, it didn't proceed without me?' (Interviewee 8, Interview 2)

Staff also signal to voting members that they are the key to Ujima's success when staff proclaimed at the end of 2019 that "A New Normal is Here" when Ujima made its first investment.

"One hundred forty-five Boston residents -- of whom, more than eighty percent identify as Black, Indigenous/Native, Latinx, Asian, Pacific Islander, Middle Eastern or Northern African, Mixed Race, or Person of Color -- had their say. They decided on the direct, positive impacts they wanted to see in their neighborhoods. And what they decided, collectively, has happened, is happening. This is happening, this process cannot be undone. An expectation has been set. It is now a permanent part of our shared story. A new normal is here." (archival data, Dec 2019 Ujima newsletter, subject line "A New Normal is Here")

Staff also use voting members to project a particular image of the organization that is not yet fully realized in order to both place racial minorities front and center within the organization and, by doing so, hoping to increase participation of people of color within Ujima.

So, for instance the outreach staff, outreach working group is almost entirely white and the investor organizing working group is almost entirely white and we're the ones who are doing these workshops. I mean and I integrate people into facilitation roles, but it's kind of like...it feels like borderline tokenizing, because it's like I'm just putting more work on these people, umm, so that people in the workshop can feel more welcome. (Interviewee 3, Interview 2)

Emotions. Powerful emotions underpin the exercise of staff authority and staff dedication to organizational values. For example, while this strategy centers on the use of control, staff nevertheless experience a great deal of discomfort at holding and unilaterally discharging their authority within the context of a participatory organization ultimately centered around its members. This tension becomes evident when staff reflect on their role in constructing the ballots for Ujima's Spring 2019 vote. Despite their discomfort staff ultimately reveal their determination in ensuring that members have the greatest latitude in decision-making—a

decision representative of their dedication and alignment to the organization's participatory values.

I mean, we're constantly weighing questions like that, like choice architecture questions. Like how many choices are right? It's a thing for us always. Like, we don't want to be paternalistic in like minimizing the number of choices [for members to vote on], but, umm, we thought more choices would be better. (Interviewee 5, Interview 2)

Although staff may display discomfort with being the sole authority figures in this strategy, they also ironically reveal significant frustrations when members do not comply with the use of their authority. For example, after trying multiple courses of action to increase voter turnout, one staff stated in exasperation and frustration "we've tried everything short of knocking on people's doors because that would just be a step too far". Similar to the cascade from discomfort to determination, frustration ultimately also led staff to a state of determination in which they double down on the use of their authority to obtain quorum for their Spring 2019 vote by halting the work of the organization altogether—something they perceived to be in alignment with both their end-state and means values.

The [director] kind of took a stand to be like 'no, we're [Ujima's] just not moving forward until we get the 51% participation' and it's kind of thrown off our schedule and timeline and it's created a number of other impacts, but on the flipside...I think like if you're someone who's a member and you're like 'oh, we really can't move forward until I do this?' I think the level of unlearning or relearning that is only going to happen through this process... (Interviewee 7, Interview 2)

The use of staff authority, corresponding staff emotions as well as staff determination to protect organizational values operate in a mutually reinforcing fashion—discomfort with authority triggers determination and subsequent actions by staff that staff perceive will safeguard values, leading to increased frustrations when members do not respond as desired and, ultimately, resulting in staff recommitting to the use of their authority to safeguard values yet again with greater determination.

III. Counterbalancing Control

In contrast to *exercising control*, which is largely activated when staff perceive organizational values to be at stake, the counterbalancing strategies are activated when staff perceive threats to member participation (*balancing authority*) or opportunities to increase member participation (*balancing authority*, *relinquishing authority* and *extending authority*). Across all three of the counterbalancing strategies, authority and values are mutually reinforcing, authority and emotions often also have mutual effect, while emotions serve to underpin the expression of values (see Figure 2).

Insert Figure 2

Balancing Authority

This counterbalancing strategy is used by staff when the pace of member participation has slowed or when members seem to be “stuck” in their attempts to shepherd the member-driven work of the organization. It is also used when opportunities to enhance member learning readily present themselves to staff. Staff are primarily concerned with supporting members to both increase the momentum of their participation and also to contribute to the organization at higher degrees of capacity.

Authority. Staff and members share authority within the organizational system in this strategy. Staff respond to opportunities or instances where momentum is needed or member learning can take place as opposed to proactively inserting themselves in member affairs as a point of departure. As such, authority is exercised equally by both parties.

Staff use various tactics to enact their authority in this strategy, namely *reframing* of goals or processes of member-driven work, *increasing or decreasing structure* within member teams as well as *on-the-spot learning invitations* for enhancing member capacity (see Table 6).

Insert Table 6

Staff intervened to remedy the slow progress of the Podcast Member Team by suggesting “...they have two tracks. One to keep working on developing an Ujima podcast and another to partner with other podcasts.” This suggestion attempts to *reframe* the goal of what it means for Ujima to have a podcast, allowing for potential secondary approach for achieving the end goal. In this way staff accompany members through a difficulty they are experiencing by providing a fresh perspective that might allow for members to view their work do their work differently as a means for encouraging increased participation.

Another tactic involves suggestions by staff to *increase or decrease the amount of structure* within member teams as a means of reducing barriers to involvement. For example, in noticing that the Arts & Culture Member Team had started to wane in their efforts to follow-through with planning events, staff offered for Ujima’s new Arts & Culture Fellow to act as their coordinator.

Staff use *on-the-spot learning invitations* to build the capacity of members to be increasingly at the forefront of building and leading the organization. Staff also use this tactic as a way of assuaging member concerns on particular issues by enhancing their learning on such topics and then placing them as the transmitters of such information to others. For example, staff

engaged in this tactic during an Investment Outreach Member Team meeting when an investment-related concern was raised:

During the investment outreach member team meeting one person raised the concern that the risk [of investing] isn't so much how much money to invest, but more about what Ujima is doing to support businesses they fund. In response to this concern one of the staff posed the question to the group 'does anyone want to learn how to talk about mitigating risk?' One of the members agreed and said they could facilitate this part of the next investment workshop on the 30th of the month. (Field notes, Trip 1)

Values. The way in which staff exert their authority through the tactics of the strategy is in many cases reflective their desire to adhere to and be continually conscious of the participatory values of the organization. For example, staff use both *reframing* and *increasing or decreasing the level of structure* to provide fresh ideas and additional perspectives as a way of accompanying members when they see that members are “stuck” and active participation is languishing. However, such actions are taken without shifting the center of authority away from members. Staff use their authority in this strategy to influence the process for how members go about doing their work (*reframing process*), how they think about their work (*reframing goals*) or how they structure themselves to accomplish their work (*increasing or decreasing structure*)—but they do not directly influence the content of member work (ex. Podcast topics). Staff also leave it open to members as to whether they adopt staff suggestions to work in different ways. For example, while staff suggest that the Podcast Member Team think of partnering with other podcasts as a means of generating momentum for their work, members ultimately decided on a different approach and gained momentum, nonetheless.

While *on-the-spot learning invitations* are used specifically to transmit content to members to enhance their capacity, its purpose is to enable members to use such learnings in order to then exert greater authority and direct the organization more fully over time as seen in the following example.

One of Ujima's staff went over its standard ground rules during the beginning of its weekly member meeting as is the practice...a prospective member attending the Ujima meeting for the first time asked about what a number of the items meant. She handled the question by answering it in part, but mostly proceeded to ask members in the audience to answer instead by putting the questions to them. They responded in kind and answered the initial questions. (Field notes, Trip 3)

Though this tactic focuses on content as opposed to process the goal remains the same—staff increasing the momentum of member involvement within the organizational system not staff overtaking the system itself.

The organization's participatory values are reflected in the nature of the tactics used by staff in this strategy (see Table 6). This ensures that power for decision-making remains with members with staff being careful of disrupting this balance of authority. This is significant and consequential given that this strategy is used solely in the context of the day-to-day member-driven work of the organization most often carried out through the work of member teams and organizational spaces expressly created for members to gather and lead such as weekly member meetings. The balanced configuration of staff authority in the context of member-driven work without overtaking member decision-making nor directing or redirecting the content of such work, serves to convey the intentions of staff to uphold, and therefore preserve, the participatory values of the organization in addition to the more functional goal of increasing member participation in the community-facing work of the organization.

Emotions. As staff exercise their authority they strategically use emotional displays to further encourage and facilitate member participation. For example, during an Arts & Culture Member Team meeting members expressed their “frustrations that things were getting stuck or not happening”. The staff member present at the meeting responded by empathizing with member feelings and concerns, reminding members “that arts and culture work is hard to do in

the context of the gig economy where everyone is just busy.” The staff member followed this comment by offering further encouragement for team members to continue with their work.

The staff member who attended the Arts & Culture member team meeting gave a report-out at the Ujima staff meeting the following day. She said that the Arts & Culture team members expressed their frustrations with things getting stuck or not happening. The staff member said she reminded the team members that arts and culture work is hard to do in the context of the gig economy where everyone is just busy. The staff member shared that she encouraged the members to just self-lead their own projects with a few other people and that they didn't need the whole group to push things forward. She said the team members appreciated that as a strategy that might work for them. (Field Notes, Trip 3)

In totality, staff respond to member hesitations by expressing positive emotions (ex. affirmation, reassurance) and to member frustrations by providing emotional confirmations that staff understand member perspectives and support and desire their continual participation (ex. empathy, encouragement). The use of staff emotions reflects the use of staff authority within the context of this strategy—situationally appropriate, balanced and responsive to member needs. Furthermore, the strategic use of emotions in tandem with the enactment of tactics in this strategy additionally convey the sincerity of the organization’s democratic agenda, as staff use their emotions to reassure members of their abilities, empathize with their challenges and empower members to continue their engagement with the organization.

Relinquishing Authority

This strategy is used by staff to shift authority back exclusively into the hands of members in two contexts. Staff extricate themselves from ongoing involvement in a particular situation or on a particular member team and also to defer to members in the context of moment-to-moment interactions between staff and members where they may not share the same perspectives.

Authority. Staff use their authority in this strategy for the purposes of relinquishing or transferring it to members so that members remain at helm of decision-making as the key

protagonists leading the work of the organization. Staff effectively use their authority to give it away.

Staff enact their authority through the use of three tactics. (see Table 7).

Insert Table 7

They *yield to member perspectives* in order to ensure that members have the dominant authority within the organization as illustrated by the following example.

During the Community Standards Committee meeting [mix of staff and members] one of the members asked if everyone's approval should be needed to push a business through for inclusion and approval to join the business alliance. Another member said there should be consensus because if there isn't then maybe someone on the committee might know something that should come out about the business. Staff didn't comment and let the decision made by members about unanimous approval for including businesses in the business alliance stand. (Field Notes, Trip 3)

In another tactic, staff actively *decrease involvement in member-led activities* as they see member participation increasing. A part-time staff member responsible for coordinating one of the member teams stated the following regarding the growing capacity of the members on the team.

"I feel like it's a moment where I can step away...I feel like we are in a place where my pieces can be held by other people" (Interviewee 3, Interview 2)

The last tactic used by staff is to *deescalate offers of support* in order to ensure that authority within the organizational system remains with members. For example, staff made an offer to the Arts & Culture Member Team that Ujima's new Arts & Culture Fellow could serve in a coordinating role for the team. It was stated by staff in tandem that they wanted to "make the offer", but "not to put that on them [the team]".

Values. The conscious relinquishing of authority and decreasing involvement on the part of staff convey the authenticity of staff intentions towards building a democratic organization run by and for its members and, as a result, supporting and preserving its means participatory values. Such sincerity of intention is exhibited by the following incident in which staff relinquish their authority to ensure members are the central authorities in the organizational system even in instances when staff and members hold differing views on consequential matters.

During the investment outreach member team meeting a comment was made by one of the staff that it makes sense if you want to do investor organizing that you yourself invest first. One of the members present pushed back on this stating that she didn't agree with this and felt that while she herself might not invest she felt that she could convey to others why it made sense for them to invest. The staff member didn't say anything in response to this remark, but I observed that she was annoyed by the members' comment. (Field notes, Trip 1)

Emotions. Staff express their emotions in ways that serve to reinforce their efforts to relinquish authority to members as aligned with the organization's participatory values. When staff witness increases in member participation they express enthusiasm and pride at what they believe to be visible signs of progress in obtaining member involvement further leading them to express relief at being able to relinquish their authority to members. The following incident illustrates these points.

One staff commented that "[the founder] was originally pretty involved in that team [Timebank Member Team], but then, very much just stepped back and was like 'you guys got this' and they did." (Interviewee 2, Interview 1)

Additionally, staff often use their emotions in this strategy as a means of reassuring members that members—not staff—are the primary holders of authority within the organization. In some cases such reassurance is provided in instances where members push back on staff stances on particular issues or on suggestions for work to be carried out in a particular way as with the following example.

The podcast member team had decided to do a podcast on the topic of “local economic mysteries” for things that are taken for granted and considered part of the local economy within disadvantaged communities, but that people might not think about like ‘why do you have 100 chiropractors in one space, but no grocery stores?’. When the team was recording the podcast, one member was interviewing another member and a staff member was handling the microphone and recording logistics. The member speaking made reference to “marginalized communities” [while recording the Ujima podcast]. During a pause before the second take of the recording, the staff member present commented to the Ujima member to “be more specific than just saying ‘marginalized communities’ so like say Mattapan specifically”. The member responded and said she didn’t want to do that because “I don’t want to call out those businesses specifically”. The staff member responded by saying “Oh! It’s your podcast!” and deferred to her. (Field notes, Trip 3)

Staff emotions of relief, pride and enthusiasm as members increase their participation and staff are able to relinquish their authority in addition to the emotional reassurances of staff that member authority is dominant, reinforce the sincerity of staff intentions to build an organization run by and for its members by serving a confidence-building function for members.

Extending Authority

In contrast to the three other strategies which focus on increasing participation in community-facing work, in this strategy staff extend their authority to involve members in an additional domain of the organization—its internal operations—in effect deepening member participation in the organization as a whole. Internal operations refer to work under the day-to-day purview of staff that might otherwise be hidden from members such as administrative or logistical decisions members would normally not be involved in or aware of.

Authority. In this strategy authority is shared between staff and members, as staff extend their authority to bring members more fully into the inner-workings of the organization and members can exert their authority to respond to such inquiries and attempts on the part of staff.

Extending authority is enacted by staff through the use of two tactics. (see Table 8).

Insert Table 8

Both involve issuing invitations for members to participate in a broader range of organizational work. Staff engage in *solicitation* as a means for gathering member input on internal operational decisions. As an example, staff intend to obtain member feedback on outreach materials for members related to the first Ujima fund investment.

At one weekly staff meeting staff wrestled for nearly forty-five minutes on the content and layout of materials for members announcing their first Ujima fund investment...staff decided to get member feedback on the documents in order to move forward and discussed a few names of more curmudgeonly members to talk to [to use as a point of reference] (Field notes, Trip 3)

The second tactic involves *shifting external representation* to members often when staff are unable to fulfill task or role commitments. For example, Ujima staff attend a multitude of conferences as well as speak at various events such as in the impact investing sector. In one instance, there was yet another opportunity to do firm-level outreach for Ujima and after concluding that none of the staff were available, they decided to see if one of their members could represent them instead. Both tactics not only pull members into more “unseen” aspects of Ujima’s work, but also have the complementary effect of broadening Ujima’s labor pool.

Values. By its very nature this strategy enhances Ujima’s adherence to its participatory values due to its focus on involving members in an additional dimension of organizational work not expressly reflected in the goals of Ujima’s democratic agenda, which center on the use of participatory values to create a community-controlled economy run by and for its members.

Staff use their authority to formalize member involvement in internal matters by adding a monthly “co-direct” portion to the weekly member meeting in early 2020 in place of the standard “co-learn” portion. During this time, staff debrief members on the details of their work, including internal staff meeting conversations, and invite members to comment and participate in decision-making. The timing of the institutionalization of this practice followed the resolution of Ujima’s

prolonged voting process and the disbursement of its first investment as major participatory milestones requiring the mobilization of members in the community-facing work of the organization. Its delayed implementation as well as the less frequent use of its tactics, function as indications of restraint on the part of staff to not overwhelm members or distract them from the primary focus of participating in the community-facing work of the organization.

Despite its secondary importance, the internal operations of the organization would remain hidden from member view if not for the deliberate efforts of staff to draw members inwards to participate in greater aspects of organizational work. Therefore, this strategy operates to deepen the participatory values of the organization in contrast to the two other counterbalancing strategies, which serve to preserve the already existing and espoused democratic values of the organization.

Emotions. Unlike with the other counterbalancing strategies, the relevant emotional displays are those of members—not staff. As with the following case, members responded with surprise—and even delight—at being asked to take on a role normally allocated to staff.

“...so I had the good fortune to go to a conference in New York...so I went on behalf of Ujima [to attend the conference] or as a member of Ujima” (Interviewee 1, Interview 1)

As such, emotions serve a confirmatory role in this strategy which members affirming staff efforts to use their authority to expand member involvement in the organization and also, in turn, enhancing the sincerity of Ujima’s participatory agenda.

IV. Implications for Participatory Outcomes at the Organizational-Level

The collective use of the four strategies by staff have implications for greater participation amongst members in the community-facing work of the organization. This is evident in three ways: members coordinating logistics with staff, members consulting with staff,

members drawing one another's expertise, and members mirroring the participation-generating behaviors of staff to generate the participation of less active members (see Table 9).

Insert Table 9

Coordinating logistics with staff enables members to take ownership of the substantive outward-facing work of the organization, while enlisting staff to support them through providing logistical or administrative support.

So each time the timebank team wanted to make a flyer, like 'hey, we have a timebank now' or, umm, 'hey, we need people to do this, this, and this' or 'hey we want to do an assembly at the citywide assembly that just happened' we would of course work with Ujima staff to coordinate that and work through that. (Interviewee 1, Interview 1)

Consulting with staff allows members to work with staff on more substantive items to ensure day-to-day decisions are values aligned with the broader goals of the organization. For example, when determining the exchange rate for Ujima timebank transactions and developing associated guidelines, members led the process of developing guidelines and then worked with staff to ensure their vision was in line with broader organizational values.

It's like this is what Ujima as a whole has decided is important to us [referring to the development of guidelines for the timebank] and then let's execute that and by executing that we'll interact with Ujima staff from...a principles standpoint, 'like, is this really aligned with what it is that we want to be doing and what the community's stated goals are? And things like that'. (Interviewee 1, Interview 1)

Drawing on member expertise from members who serve regularly on member teams to enhance member and organizational learning in this context supplements the use of *on-the-spot learning invitations* provided by staff in the *balancing authority* strategy. *Drawing on member expertise places* members at the helm of both contributing and using their own expertise to further the learning and community-facing work of the organization as it relates to technical

matters (ex. Ujima's timebank or podcast) or even in relation to safeguarding organizational values as in the following example.

A solidarity member on the Investment Outreach Member Team who does racial equity training in a professional capacity presented a proposal in writing to do a white reparations funding study group as a way to engage solidarity members further around the concept of reparations and investing. (Field notes, Trip 3)

Members also engage in *mirroring staff behaviors* in order to generate the participation of less active members and to stay meaningfully engaged in leading community-facing work.

Members accomplish this by mimicking the tactics used by staff across the various strategies.

For example, the Investment Outreach Member Team engaged in the *one-on-one appeals* tactic used by staff during the exercising control strategy in the following scenario.

During the investment outreach member team meeting in August there was a conversation about how to better engage other members of the team. When thinking of potential solutions, members recalled how the staff member who used to coordinate the team would send personal emails or texts when she was there. (Field Notes, Trip 3)

DISCUSSION

Control and Participation

This research makes two main contributions to the research literature. First, in contrast to existing research which claims that a consequence of oligarchical control is the loss of participation—characterized as “becalming” by Zald & Ash (1966)—this research shows that control can be used as a means to bring about participation when it functions as a safeguard for core organizational values and when it is counterbalanced by the use of less overt strategies which do not use control as their modus operandi. Therefore, control becomes valuable as a means of instantiating democracy in contrast to prevailing research which has treated control as the antithesis of democracy.

Drawing on values to activate and counterbalance control. One of the key implications of this contribution is to challenge and add nuance to the commonly agreed upon premise of oligarchical control—the concentration of resources within a small subset of individuals of a broader group who discharge such resources for their own benefit (Cassinelli 1953; Acemoglu & Robinson, 2007). Far from using such resources for their own benefit and advancement, the impetus for exercising control on the part of staff is the defense of core organizational values, especially the organization’s end-state racial justice values. Therefore, staff use their resources to the benefit of the organization and its members, many of whom are people of color and all of which joined in support of the organization’s racial justice mission.

The connection of control to empowering a minority population allows its use to be more heavily tethered in its intentionality to the well-being of members. Given that control was one of many tactics used to subjugate minorities and produce marginalization, it is all the more ironic and intriguing that its use by staff aligns with their intentions to empower the same population.

This research shows that control in the service of a benevolent agenda to instantiate collective values can be fruitful and empowering for enhancing minority member participation.

Furthermore, it is also the dedication of staff to preserving the organization's participatory values that allows for control to be counterbalanced by the use of other strategies in which control is not present, and as a result, be well-received within the organizational system. Therefore, beneficial outcomes for organizational values and generating participation result not from the use of control in isolation, but from exercising control in tandem with the three counterbalancing strategies.

Finally, while this study of an early stage organization reveals a productive relationship between the use of control to defend and secure organizational values in the early stages of a participatory organization, it is uncertain whether the use of control will remain values-driven as the organization begins to mature.

Drawing on authority to counterbalance control. The configuration of authority between staff and members across the counterbalancing strategies also has direct implications for challenging three key components of oligarchical control—the indispensability of staff, the widening distance between staff and members, and conservative goal displacement in support of organizational survival (Jenkins, 1977). Actively *relinquishing authority* to members allows for staff to avoid being indispensable to the organization, stepping back when member participation increases. Staff engage in *extending authority* to close the distance between the work of members and staff as they invite members to become more intimately involved in the internal operations of the organization normally hidden from view. Finally, staff display caution *balancing authority* with members as part of a delicate balance to both encourage momentum, but not overtake the content of decision-making. The authority configurations underpinning the counterbalancing

strategies not only are able to actively generate participation, but also to counteract the potential for oligarchy to take root despite the use of control.

Explicit and Implicit Means for Generating Participation

The second contribution of this research to the literature on participatory organizations relates to the underlying mechanisms by which participation is generated across all four strategies, including the use of control. Generating and sustaining participation is often discussed as a singular task to be achieved with various studies uncovering a range of concrete factors, principles and actions which may hasten participation (e.g. Chen, 2016) or lessen its demise in the face of oligarchy (e.g. Osterman, 2006; Postmes, et. al., 2001; Polletta, 2002). My study lends great nuance to the existing literature in this context by noting two means by which participation is generated—explicit and implicit.

Explicit means for generating participation. The tactics of each strategy serve as the mechanisms that staff use to increase participation in a direct fashion. In all cases the tactics denote specific, concrete actions that staff engage in to increase participation, which can therefore also serve as a playbook that other participatory organizations might use to the same ends. In this way the tactics of each of the strategies serve as the functional or operational mechanisms which staff use their authority to enact for the express purpose of increasing member participation.

Implicit means for generating participation. The collective means which surround the enactment of tactics—authority configuration, emotions and values—indirectly serve to increase participation by conveying the sincerity of the motives of staff and the authenticity of their participatory agenda (counterbalancing strategies) as well as their sensitivity to any potential

violations of their participatory—but especially—their racial justice values through the use of control.

Control manifests when organizational values are at stake with staff reacting to member behaviors or acting proactively to safeguard such values. The concentration of authority with staff, the simultaneous discomfort staff feel with their own authority as well as their frustration with members lack of adherence to their authority, and the role values play as catalysts for the use of control, collectively convey this sensitivity. As a result of the mutually reinforcing relationship between authority, emotions and values in the context of control, staff are able to implicitly signal to members their value and singular place within the organization.

In the context of the counterbalancing strategies, authority is either relinquished by staff or balanced between members and staff, while staff emotions are used to encourage and reassure, with participatory values influencing the initial authority configuration and also being preserved and enhanced as an outcome. These more implicit mechanisms convey the sincerity of staff and the authenticity of the organization's participatory agenda to members as another means of generating greater participation.

Limitations of Current Research

Access constraints led to certain limitations of the current research. I was not able to engage in semi-structured interviews with Ujima members in order to gain a more intimate, first-hand sense for their experiences with Ujima. While I was able to speak with members on many occasions without staff present and also interacted with them freely at Ujima events, I was unable to engage them in a specific line of questioning that might have provided greater insight into the participatory dynamics of the organization.

The process of negotiating access into the organization took approximately 6 months from first meeting the founder at a conference in the summer of 2018 to initiating field work in January 2019. This created an initial delay in the data collection process. After the first trip, I proposed following Ujima for a period of 18 months and offered to work for Ujima in a volunteer capacity for the entire summer of 2019 while being based in Boston so that as I collected my data I could also be of service to the organization. This was met by resistance from the organization. In the end, I was also only able to spend time in the field in accordance with certain time slots that worked best for staff, having to travel back and forth from Ithaca to Boston to engage in research, as opposed to spending a continuous period of time embedded within the organization. This process of engagement and reengagement slowed the pace at which I was able to understand Ujima's organizational dynamics and also impeded the flow and ease with which I was able to establish rapport with staff and become embedded within the organization. However, neither limitation—access to members nor access to the field site—ultimately served to inhibit the integrity of the research or the veracity of the findings. Such limitations did, however, greatly slow the pace of the overall research process, inclusive of data collection and subsequent data analysis.

Future Research

Future research would benefit from exploring a few topics arising from the current research in greater depth. As indicated in the findings, members engage in a process of behavioral mirroring as they mimic the strategies used by staff to generate participation when they are faced with the need for more involvement from a greater number of their fellow member team members. In some instances members were encouraged by staff to use tactics from the various strategies, but in most cases members came up with approaches on their own that

happened to mirror such approaches. Further research would lead to a deeper understanding of the dynamics between members of participatory organizations and the implications for different classes of active members to emerge.

I also observed incidents in which staff would hold each other accountable or when members would hold staff accountable for potential violations of the participatory and racial justice values of the organization. Such actions served to function as ‘guardrails’ (see Smith & Besharov, 2019) for the effective functioning of Ujima as a participatory organization and its adherence to its democratic ideals. Future research could explore how accountability tactics amongst staff and across staff-member lines might serve to protect against the pull of oligarchy.

Practical Contributions

This research provides three contributions to the work of management practitioners within organizations. First, this research provides meaningful insights into strategies which can be used to increase the participation of various groups of individuals within organizational settings. While this work most closely speaks to that of collectivist and alternative organizational forms, its findings are relevant for all organizations seeking to drive participation and enhance employee voice. For example, the social sector, which has been criticized as of late for the absence of beneficiary voices in positions of authority driving the social change agenda (Giridharadas, 2018). This research provides a roadmap for how to place beneficiaries at the helm of decision-making within social purpose organizations by increasing their participation in ways which also safeguard their authority and power.

Second, the findings provide insight into how to engage and support marginalized or minority populations within organizational settings when such engagement is reflected in the organization’s core values. Given the importance of intersectionality in the workplace and social

movements such as the Movement for Black Lives, the findings this study provides from studying the racial justice work of Ujima are pertinent and relevant now more than ever.

CONCLUSION

The inherent tension between democracy and oligarchical control has been studied at length in the context of mature participatory organizations. In contrast, this research examines the nascent stages of a participatory organization in order to understand how such organizations generate participation from their target population in the first place. Ujima serves as a particularly useful case because its purpose is predicated on being run by its members, but it must first gain enough member involvement for this ambition to come to fruition. My findings show how, paradoxically, the use of control helps to resolve the inherent tension at the heart of Ujima, and by extension other early-stage participatory organizations: it is through the use of control, alongside three counterbalancing strategies of balancing, relinquishing, and extending authority, that Ujima staff empower members to lead the organization when they both cannot be forced to lead and when staff are placed in lead roles in the initial stages of organizational formation by necessity. Counterintuitively, control serves as an enabler of democracy.

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Table 1. Ujima Organizational History & Milestones

<p>2014-2016</p> <p><i>Key Milestones</i></p>	<p>Idea Formulation & Prototyping</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ujima founder assembles a study group of approximately 40 individuals to examine various community economic development models. Participants spanned impact investing firms, grassroots organizations, local Boston activists, and other nonprofits • After meeting consistently for 6 months, the founder writes a concept paper of the Ujima model which the study group then provides feedback on • In early 2015 Ujima holds a “Solidarity Summit” as a pilot of the Ujima voting and investment processes with businesses from the community as well as approximately 100 community members in attendance • In 2016 Ujima hires its director as its first full-time staff member
<p>2017-2018</p> <p><i>Key Milestones</i></p>	<p>Launching</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ujima opens for membership fall 2017 • Three neighborhood assemblies and one citywide assembly are convened • The fund is launched in December 2018 • 36 Community Standards for Ujima businesses receiving investments are developed by Ujima members
<p>2019 forward</p> <p><i>Key Milestones</i></p>	<p>Experimentation & Adjustment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By August 2019 Ujima had raised approximately \$1 million for its \$5 million capital fund • Ujima approves its neighborhood investment plans which identify lists of businesses loved, needed and that should be replaced within each neighborhood as well as its 36 Community Standards • Ujima invests in its first business in November 2019 following a member vote

Table 2. Summary of Data Analyzed

	Trip 1 (Jan 2019)	Trip 2 (June 2019)	Trip 3 (August 2019)	Total
<i>Interviews</i>				20 Interviews
Founder	✓	✓		2
Director	✓	✓		2
Fund manager	✓	✓		2
Communications organizer	✓	✓		2
Member organizer*			✓	1
Fund associate	✓	✓		2
Part-time staff	✓	✓	✓	4
CED staff	✓	✓	✓	5
<i>Observation</i>				27 Meetings
Weekly Ujima Staff Meetings	✓	✓	✓	5
Other Internal Ujima Meetings		✓	✓	6
Weekly Member Meetings	✓	✓	✓	5
Member Team Meetings	✓	✓	✓	5
External Events Hosted by Ujima	✓	✓	✓	3
External Events Attended by Ujima		✓	✓	3

*Member organizer was hired in July 2019.

Table 3. Summary of Components of each Strategy

Strategy	Authority	Emotions	Implications for Participation	Implications for Values
<i>Exercising Control</i>	Staff	Experienced by staff in defense of values, in response to member actions or in response to their own authority	Increased Participation in Community-Facing Work	Internalizing & Setting Norms for Racial Justice Values (end-state & means values)
<i>Balancing Authority</i>	Staff & Members	Used by staff as a strategic resource to support members	Increased Participation in Community-Facing Work	Preserving Participatory Values (means values)
<i>Relinquishing Authority</i>	Staff relinquish to members	Used by staff as a strategic resource to support members	Increased Participation in Community-Facing Work	Preserving Participatory Values (means values)
<i>Extending Authority</i>	Staff & Members	Experienced by members in response to staff actions	Increased Participation in Internal Operations	Enhancing Participatory Values (means values)

Figure 1. Mutually Reinforcing Dynamics of the Exercising Control Strategy

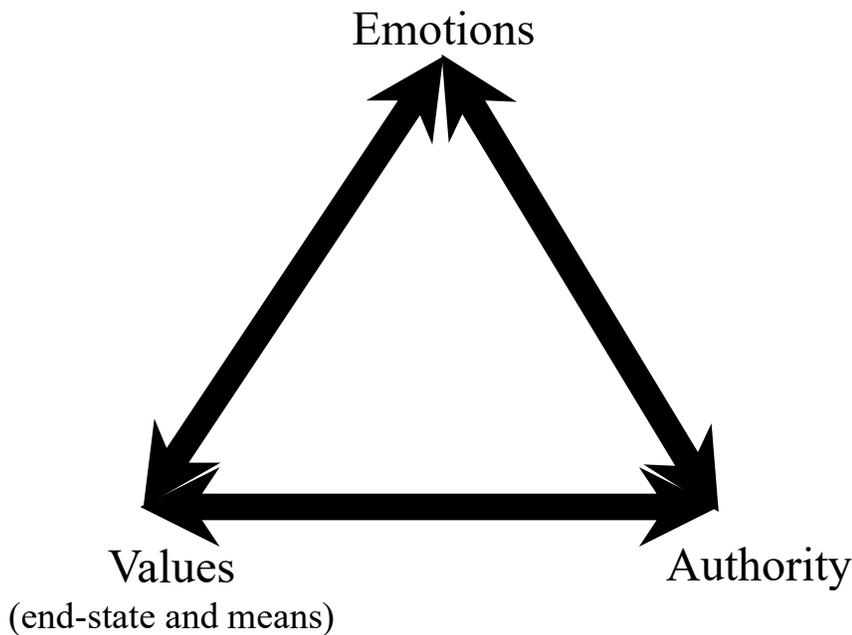


Table 4. Exercising Control Tactics

Tactic	Description of Data
Value Proclamations	<p>Both interview quotes below are describing the same incident, but from the perspective of two different staff.</p>
	<p><i>"We do spend a lot of energy thinking about how to, because it's a multi-racial, multi-class project, how do you deal with folks with more privilege and power. So in our last assembly we did this skit about how we wanted white folks to engage with people of color in this space because in the assembly before some people were really triggered by how some people were acting in the space. So we were like we've heard about it, let's address this upfront and like not dance around it, but name it and try to lean-into it."</i> (Interviewee 7, Interview 1)</p> <p><i>"In our last assembly [another staff member] and I, umm, did a skit with [the director] to pretend to be really clueless white people who are just like speaking over everybody and holding a lot of space and then being shut down kind of gently. A gentle attempt and then a more clear, like 'you're not acting appropriately' and framing that if like you're like a white person or a man you have relatively more privilege you should be thinking about listening first rather than speaking first."</i> (Interviewee 8, Interview 1)</p>
	<p><i>"So with voting to ratify the community standards specifically there was some talk about to what extent we needed to reach quorum, because they had been created by the community standards committee and the community standards committee had been voted on by Ujima membership and we had created...co-created the standards with Ujima members during our last assembly. Umm, granted the reason we were having to ratify them was that we didn't reach quorum during that last set of decisions being made in October, umm, but it's like members have received a lot of input on this and there's a lot of buy-in into these standards, so it's, like, 'do we need to ratify them?' and, a lot of sort of the reason it came up was that we knew how hard it was going to be to get people to engage in the vote over the timeline that we had, but we...it was kind of like a, something that when it was said, it was like 'oh, that's so clearly out of line with what we are doing that we can't do that'. So, I guess we kind of radically committed to sort of the integrity of our processes, even though it might be more convenient to not be."</i> (Interviewee 1, Interview 2)</p>
	<p><i>"I mean, we're constantly weighing questions like that, like choice architecture questions. Like how many choices are right? It's a thing for us always. Like, we don't want to be paternalistic in like minimizing the number of choices [for members to vote on], but, umm, we thought more choices would be better. I can't remember why we reached that decision. I think it was just that we were honestly looking at that many [financial institutions] and were like 'what were the ones we know we can probably cut off from here?' and we went from like twelve to seven and then we were like let's put down all seven...seven financial institutions and within each of those, like two or three options...I think it was the director's call. I think she was like these are the things we're considering [list of banks to invest fund money] so let's share all of them [with the community]. I think it was that simple."</i> (Interviewee 5, Interview 2)</p>
	<p>All three pieces of data speak to the same incident:</p> <p><i>Staff talk about the decision to set a participation goal for the fund vs a monetary goal at the Investment Outreach Member Team meeting. She said they did it in part because they weren't sure what monetary goal to set.</i> (Field Notes, Trip 1)</p> <p><i>"When we were setting a goal of, for investment for the first month. We were like 'ok, it would be great for us to have a goal for ourselves, but like how do we think about that?' And this was a goal we wanted to communicate to our people with our newsletter and on social media and stuff. We calculated how much we need to raise every month between now and...we want to raise \$2million by the end of the year...so we calculated that out, that we wanted to raise \$200k in the first month and then we're like 'well, do we want to communicate a number or do we want to actually say that we</i></p>

	<p>want to reach 100 investors?' Because it's not as much about just the money amount. It's also about showing that there is widespread community support for it. " (Interviewee 2, Interview 1)</p> <p>One of the members of the Investment Outreach Member Team commented that it would be better for Ujima if they had more participants investing smaller sums of money. (Field Notes, Trip 2)</p>
	<p>At the investment outreach team meeting there are concerns shared that the Ujima membership not growing; why is it so hard to engage voting members?</p> <p>Staff mtg response: The director said it's not true that Ujima isn't growing. Staff said it's common that white people make statements as if they are fact even though they may not be and the effect of this is that others around them often then also take those statements as fact. We need to do better job at encouraging folks to be in relationship with community, instead of making assumptions.</p> <p>The director said they should try to talk to voting members or members of color about the statements being made instead of just making them. There will be class + race dynamics. If we don't attend to them they will continue to play out. Most white ppl do not know how to follow other people's leads. They want to do workshops on class and race, and all of the intersections</p> <p>I clarified that the comments made seemed to come from a place of concern like "how do we engage voting members" and "Ujima isn't growing and this is concerning", but there was a lot of push-back on this that it's still white people making the claim from their perspective, not understanding the whole (Field Notes, Trip 3)</p>
	<p>Three quotes that explain the same situation</p> <p>"I think some of the tension for folks on the ground...members are like, even if they like Ujima conceptually, again, like, people aren't used to their votes actually mattering...so, it's like you want me to spend 30 minutes on this thing and, like, historically when I do stuff like this, it's like I don't know what happened with my answers...what I really respect is that she [director] kind of took a stand to be like 'no, we're just not moving forward until we get the 51% participation' and it's kind of thrown off our schedule and timeline and it's created a number of other impacts, but on the flipside...you know, people were, like tonight [at the weekly member meeting] they're doing phone banking to call people to be like 'hey we need your vote'. And I think like if you're someone who's a member and you're like 'oh, we really can't move forward until I do this?' I think the level of unlearning or relearning that is only going to happen through this process..." (Interviewee 7, Interview 2)</p> <p>"Umm, so, a huge part of Ujima is about practicing the democracy. We were just talking about, in the meeting last week about the fact that if people, if we don't get 51% quorum on this vote, around the bank, [the director's] just going to tell everybody we can't do anything, because you didn't vote and having people be like 'oh, my vote actually mattered, it didn't proceed without me?' isn't an experience that people have very often. So, that's, I think we try to practice collectivity and democracy, like, collective governance in a lot of ways, but that like actual practice of paying attention to yourself in relationship to the community and, like, actually making decisions that benefit everybody." (Interviewee 8, Interview 2)</p> <p>"...we have another vote that's coming up where we're actually allocating to a business to make our first investment, but we need to pass this first [the existing vote]...the timelines are getting crunched, so it's like 'what are we going to do?'...having it [the first investment vote] not happen would be kind of an illustrative moment for folks to realize 'hey we need you to be involved in this process' so yeah, so that's been difficult." (Interviewee 1, Interview 2)</p>
<p>One-on-one appeals</p>	<p>One of the members made an investment at the note cap of the Kujichagulia pool (\$10k), but the investment could also fall into the Umoja pool because he meets the investment criteria for both. Upon hearing this the director wanted the fund manager to push back on investments that come in at</p>

	<p><i>the note cap moving forward to see if they should or could be in Umoja because based on the financial modeling of the capital fund, it is best for Ujima if most of their notes are from the Umoja pool. (Field Notes, Trip 3)</i></p> <p>Below data are all about the voting process:</p> <p><i>The director said that voting is still a major topic. The current vote has been going on for 2 months. She said they have “hit a wall” with getting enough votes. They're now texting and calling people to respond. People are not responding to emails with deadlines. The director said we are not “top of mind” which is ok. Staff talk through a number of different ideas to get people to vote. One idea was to do a visual that shows how far away they are from getting 51% of the vote. Another was voting buddies. Another thought was public sharing of names who have voted and who is left. Crafting a personal voting history that gets sent out to members at some sort of regular interval. (Field Notes, Trip 3)</i></p> <p><i>During another staff meeting the director talks about the current vote they have and says they're “pressing people to vote” (Field Notes, Trip 3)</i></p> <p><i>“so a lot of it has been reducing barriers to participation, so like having online ballots, having in person ballots, umm, having a...and then, sort of, reminding folks that this is happening and then emphasizing the importance, so we mention it in our emails, we have dedicated emails, we have, umm, swarms. So, like we have a member who is, like, a swarm lead and that person will be responsible for contacting ten folks and making sure they vote on each of the ballots...um, we've sent postcards out to folks reminding them to vote. Uh, so we've done everything, almost everything short of knocking on their doors and being like 'hey, vote', because that's kind of a step too far. So, yeah, we're thinking about how to drive engagement and then trying to reduce barriers to participation, are the two main strategies there ” (Interviewee 1, Interview 2)</i></p> <p><i>Ujima set-up phone banking to call members directly as well as set office hours for people to connect with staff and ask questions on the ballots. One of the staff described reading each ballot one-by-one and going over all of the material with them over the phone so they could vote. Staff also made a video with someone walking people through each ballot. (Field Notes, Trip 3)</i></p> <p><i>One staff member said that personal, “one-on-one outreach is the only thing that’s working right now for the voting.” (Field Notes, Trip 3)</i></p>
Procedural adjustment	<p><i>The director mentioned in a staff meeting in June that they're thinking of giving members the option of abstaining from voting. I raised some cautions around this b/c does it allow people to opt-out and disengage? She said that she doesn't see it that way because it would be an active choice they would make through the routine voting process. The decision to allow for abstaining was in effect by August. (Field Notes, Trip 2)</i></p> <p><i>“Yes, pipeline partners...So, that's this idea that two thirds of our investments each year are going to go to names on our list [neighborhood investment plan list generated by members], but we reserve the right to do 1/3 of our investments with someone who's not on our list. Someone who BII is like 'we just found this great baker in Roxbury, this black woman, she could really use a co-investor. We're gonna give her 50, can y'all give her 50 too?'. It would still go up for a community vote, but she would be circumventing this list [neighborhood investment plan list generated by members] that we have. So, we're asking our members, number one, is it ok for us to do that...to have like an onramp that lets you cut the line for small number of our deals each year? And, two, who should have the privilege to be able to refer folks that get to cut the line. Like, should BII have that right? Should LEAF, the Local Enterprise Assistance Fund, have that right? So, we're presenting mission-aligned other funders and being like 'can we work with them as referral partners?’ (Interviewee 5, Interview 2)</i></p>
Claiming or Projecting Success	<p><i>The Ujima fund makes its first investment (in a composting cooperative) in November 2019 after a three-week voting period, releasing the following statement as part of a year-end email to their membership: “One hundred forty-five Boston residents -- of whom, more than eighty percent identify as Black, Indigenous/Native, Latinx, Asian, Pacific Islander, Middle Eastern or Northern African, Mixed Race, or Person of Color -- had their say. They decided on the direct, positive impacts they</i></p>

	<i>wanted to see in their neighborhoods. And what they decided, collectively, has happened, is happening. This is happening, this process cannot be undone. An expectation has been set. It is now a permanent part of our shared story. A new normal is here.” (archival data, Dec 2019 Ujima newsletter, subject line “A New Normal is Here”)</i>
Claiming or Projecting Success & Value Proclamation	<i>So, for instance the outreach stuff, outreach working group is almost entirely white and the investor organizing working group is almost entirely white and we're the ones who are doing these workshops. I mean and I integrate people into facilitation roles, but it's kind of like...it feels like borderline tokenizing, because it's like I'm just putting more work on these people, umm, so that people in the workshop can feel more welcome. (Interviewee 3, Interview 2)</i>

Table 5. Exercising Control to Generate Participation through Enacting Values & Authority

End-state Values at Stake (input)	Explicit use of Tactics to Support Values & Generate Participation	Description of Data	Implicit use of End-State Values to Generate Participation (output)
Setting norms for upholding racial justice values	Value Proclamations	<p>Three quotes that explain the same situation</p> <p><i>“I think some of the tension for folks on the ground...members are like, even if they like Ujima conceptually, again, like, people aren't used to their votes actually mattering...so, it's like you want me to spend 30 minutes on this thing and, like, historically when I do stuff like this, it's like I don't know what happened with my answers...what I really respect is that she [director] kind of took a stand to be like 'no, we're just not moving forward until we get the 51% participation' and it's kind of thrown off our schedule and timeline and it's created a number of other impacts, but on the flipside...you know, people were, like tonight [at the weekly member meeting] they're doing phone banking to call people to be like 'hey we need your vote'. And I think like if you're someone who's a member and you're like 'oh, we really can't move forward until I do this?' I think the level of unlearning or relearning that is only going to happen through this process...” (Interviewee 7, Interview 2)</i></p> <p><i>“Umm, so, a huge part of Ujima is about practicing the democracy. We were just talking about, in the meeting last week about the fact that if people, if we don't get 51% quorum on this vote, around the bank, [the director's] just going to tell everybody we can't do anything, because you didn't vote and having people be like 'oh, my vote actually mattered, it didn't proceed without me?' isn't an experience that people have very often. So, that's, I think we try to practice collectivity and democracy, like, collective governance in a lot of ways, but that like actual practice of paying attention to yourself in relationship to the community and, like, actually making decisions that benefit everybody.” (Interviewee 8, Interview 2)</i></p> <p><i>“...we have another vote that's coming up where we're actually allocating to a business to make our first investment, but we need to pass this first [the existing vote] ...the timelines are getting crunched, so it's like 'what are we going to do?'...having it [the first investment vote] not happen would be kind of an illustrative moment for folks to</i></p>	Show voting members they are valued and staff are committed to them

		<i>realize 'hey we need you to be involved in this process' so yeah, so that's been difficult."</i> (Interviewee 1, Interview 2)	
	Procedural adjustment	<i>The director mentioned in a staff meeting in June that they're thinking of giving members the option of abstaining from voting. I raised some cautions around this b/c does it allow people to opt-out and disengage? She said that she doesn't see it that way because it would be an active choice they would make through the routine voting process. The decision to allow for abstaining was in effect by August. (Field Notes, Trip 2)</i>	
	Value Proclamations	<i>"I mean, we're constantly weighing questions like that, like choice architecture questions. Like how many choices are right? It's a thing for us always. Like, we don't want to be paternalistic in like minimizing the number of choices [for members to vote on], but, umm, we thought more choices would be better. I can't remember why we reached that decision. I think it was just that we were honestly looking at that many [financial institutions] and were like 'what were the ones we know we can probably cut off from here?' and we went from like twelve to seven and then we were like let's put down all seven...seven financial institutions and within each of those, like two or three options...I think it was the director's call. I think she was like these are the things we're considering [list of banks to invest fund money] so let's share all of them [with the community]. I think it was that simple. "</i> (Interviewee 5, Interview 2)	
	Value Proclamations	<i>"So with voting to ratify the community standards specifically there was some talk about to what extent we needed to reach quorum, because they had been created by the community standards committee and the community standards committee had been voted on by Ujima membership and we had created...co-created the standards with Ujima members during our last assembly. Umm, granted the reason we were having to ratify them was that we didn't reach quorum during that last set of decisions being made in October, umm, but it's like members have received a lot of input on this and there's a lot of buy-in into these standards, so it's, like, 'do we need to ratify them?' and, a lot of sort of the reason it came up was that we knew how hard it was going to be to get people to engage in the vote over the timeline that we had, but we...it was kind of like a, something that when it was said, it was like 'oh, that's so clearly out of line with what we are doing that we can't do that'. So, I guess we kind of radically committed to sort of the integrity of our processes, even though it might be more convenient to not be."</i> (Interviewee 5, Interview 2)	
Internalizing racial justice values	Value Proclamations	<i>"We do spend a lot of energy thinking about how to, because it's a multi-racial, multi-class project, how do you deal with folks with more privilege and power. So in our last assembly we did this skit about how we wanted white folks to engage with people of color in this space because in the assembly before some people were really triggered by how some people were acting in the space. So we were like we've heard about it, let's address this upfront and like not dance around it, but name it and try to lean-into it."</i> (Interviewee 7, Interview 1)	Direct or redirect the actions or perspectives of solidarity members & Show voting members they are valued and staff are committed to them
Internalizing racial justice values		<i>Concern was brought up about the team experiencing turnover. One staff member made the comment that turnover is just "part of life and when you are concerned about something like that you're coming from a privileged position"</i> (Field Notes, Trip 3)	Direct or redirect the actions or perspectives of solidarity members

Setting norms for upholding racial justice values	Claiming or Projecting Success & Value Proclamation	<i>So, for instance the outreach stuff, outreach working group is almost entirely white and the investor organizing working group is almost entirely white and we're the ones who are doing these workshops. I mean and I integrate people into facilitation roles, but it's kind of like...it feels like borderline tokenizing, because it's like I'm just putting more work on these people, umm, so that people in the workshop can feel more welcome. (Interviewee 3, Interview 2)</i>	Use voting members to project a successful image of Ujima
	Claiming or Projecting Success	<i>The Ujima fund makes its first investment (in a composting cooperative) in November 2019 after a three-week voting period, releasing the following statement as part of a year-end email to their membership: "One hundred forty-five Boston residents -- of whom, more than eighty percent identify as Black, Indigenous/Native, Latinx, Asian, Pacific Islander, Middle Eastern or Northern African, Mixed Race, or Person of Color -- had their say. They decided on the direct, positive impacts they wanted to see in their neighborhoods. And what they decided, collectively, has happened, is happening. This is happening, this process cannot be undone. An expectation has been set. It is now a permanent part of our shared story. A new normal is here." (archival data, Dec 2019 Ujima newsletter, subject line "A New Normal is Here")</i>	Convey to voting members that they are in charge of Ujima's future and have already made it successful through their actions
Internalizing racial justice values	Value Proclamations	<p><i>at the investment outreach team meeting there are concerns shared that the Ujima membership not growing; why is it so hard to engage voting members?</i></p> <p><i>Staff mtg response: The director said it's not true that Ujima isn't growing. Staff said it's common that white people make statements as if they are fact even though they may not be and the effect of this is that others around them often then also take those statements as fact. We need to do better job at encouraging folks to be in relationship with community, instead of making assumptions.</i></p> <p><i>The director said they should try to talk to voting members or members of color about the statements being made instead of just making them. There will be class + race dynamics. If we don't attend to them they will continue to play out. Most white ppl do not know how to follow other people's leads. They want to do workshops on class and race, and all of the intersections</i></p> <p><i>I clarified that the comments made seemed to come from a place of concern like "how do we engage voting members" and "Ujima isn't growing and this is concerning", but there was a lot of push-back on this that it's still white people making the claim from their perspective, not understanding the whole (Field Notes, Trip 3)</i></p>	Direct or redirect the actions or perspectives of solidarity members
Setting norms for upholding racial justice values	One-on-one appeals	<i>One of the members made an investment at the note cap of the Kujichagulia pool (\$10k), but the investment could also fall into the Umoja pool because he meets the investment criteria for both. Upon hearing this the director wanted the fund manager to push back on investments that come in at the note cap moving forward to see if they should or could be in Umoja because based on the financial modeling of the capital fund, it is best for Ujima if most of their notes are from the Umoja pool. (Field Notes, Trip 3)</i>	Direct or redirect the actions or perspectives of solidarity members
Setting norms for upholding racial justice values	One-on-one appeals	<p>Below data are all about the voting process:</p> <p><i>The director said that voting is still a major topic. The current vote has been going on for 2 months. She said they have "hit a wall" with getting enough votes. They're now texting and calling people to</i></p>	Show voting members they are valued and staff are committed to them

	<p><i>respond. People are not responding to emails with deadlines. The director said we are not “top of mind” which is ok. Staff talk through a number of different ideas to get people to vote. One idea was to do a visual that shows how far away they are from getting 51% of the vote. Another was voting buddies. Another thought was public sharing of names who have voted and who is left. Crafting a personal voting history that gets sent out to members at some sort of regular interval. (Field Notes, Trip 3)</i></p> <p><i>During another staff meeting the director talks about the current vote they have and says they’re “pressing people to vote” (Field Notes, Trip 3)</i></p> <p><i>“so a lot of it has been reducing barriers to participation, so like having online ballots, having in person ballots, umm, having a...and then, sort of, reminding folks that this is happening and then emphasizing the importance, so we mention it in our emails, we have dedicated emails, we have, umm, swarms. So, like we have a member who is, like, a swarm lead and that person will be responsible for contacting ten folks and making sure they vote on each of the ballots...um, we’ve sent postcards out to folks reminding them to vote. Uh, so we’ve done everything, almost everything short of knocking on their doors and being like 'hey, vote', because that's kind of a step too far. So, yeah, we're thinking about how to drive engagement and then trying to reduce barriers to participation, are the two main strategies there ” (Interviewee 1, Interview 2)</i></p> <p><i>Ujima set-up phone banking to call members directly as well as set office hours for people to connect with staff and ask questions on the ballots. One of the staff described reading each ballot one-by-one and going over all of the material with them over the phone so they could vote. Staff also made a video with someone walking people through each ballot. (Field Notes, Trip 2)</i></p> <p><i>One staff member said that personal, “one-on-one outreach is the only thing that’s working right now for the voting.” (Field Notes, Trip 2)</i></p>	
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Figure 2. Mutually Reinforcing Dynamics of the Counterbalancing Strategies

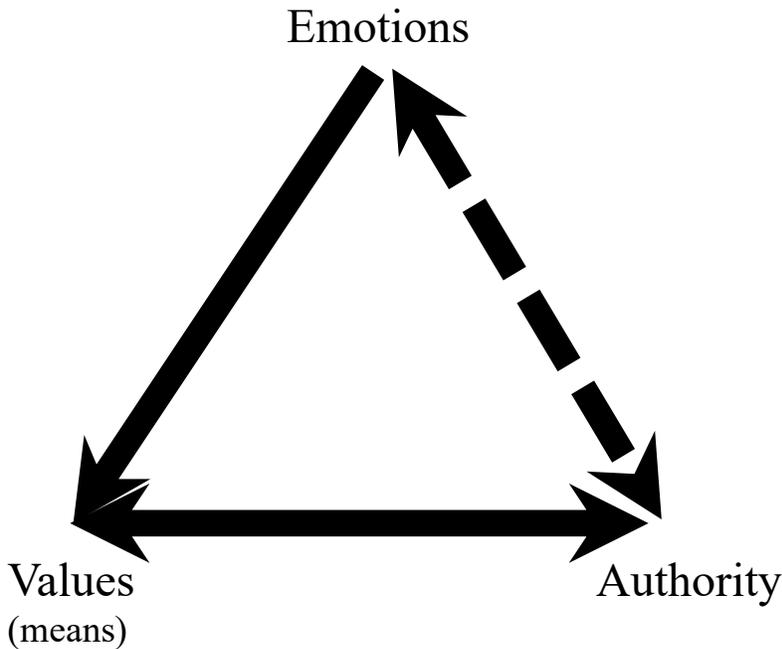


Table 6. Balancing Authority Tactics

Tactic	Description of Data
Reframing (process, goals)	<i>The staff member who attended the Arts & Culture member team meeting gave a report-out at the Ujima staff meeting the following day. She said that the Arts & Culture team members expressed their frustrations with things getting stuck or not happening. The staff member said she reminded the team members that arts and culture work is hard to do in the context of the gig economy where everyone is just busy. The staff member shared that she encouraged the members to just self-lead their own projects with a few other people and that they didn't need the whole group to push things forward. She said the team members appreciated that as a strategy that might work for them. (Field Notes, Trip 3)</i>
	<i>One of the staff mentioned to the Investor Outreach team that they have some overlap with the Outreach team so it might be good to attend their next member team meeting which was coming up. One of the members committed to attending it. Later at the weekly staff meeting, a few staff mentioned that it was important for the Investment Outreach Team and the Outreach Member Team to talk and coordinate so that each knew what the other was doing and they wouldn't end up going to the same outreach events, etc. The idea was thrown out that each team could give 10-15 min updates at their respective team mtgs to ensure they are clear on roles and make sure there isn't overlap. (Field Notes, Trip 3)</i>
	<i>During an Ujima staff meeting, staff share concerns that the Podcast member team seems to be moving slowly. The director presents the idea for them to have "two tracks" for their work. One to keep working on developing an Ujima podcast and another to partner with other podcasts. (Field Notes, Trip 2)</i>
	<i>One staff said jokingly that they are "exercising the democracy muscle" in reference to the voting taking a long time. The director commented that they should "embrace and take pride in an enduring voting process"one of the members said "not everything has to be a sprint" ...they all joked (staff and members together) with other analogies about things moving slowly. (Field Notes, Trip 3)</i>

Shifts in structure (increase, decrease)	<i>The director mentioned that at the Arts & Culture member team the night before there was an offer made [by her or one of the staff] that Ujima’s new Arts & Culture Fellow could help coordinate the group moving forward. (Field Notes, Trip 3)</i>
	<i>Staff member had asked an Ujima member to come and be interviewed for the Ujima podcast, so he was there at the member team meeting and another Ujima member interviewed him. Staff did equipment logistics. (Field Notes, Trip 3)</i>
Reframing process & decreasing structure	<i>When discussing the podcast member team at one of the staff meetings, one of the staff said that the team having a formal structure for the podcast and having to have a full season with the sessions being in the same format seemed to detract from the team just doing it. This was getting the member team sidetracked for a while, so now the team is just moving forward and will build in a structure as they go. Thinking narrowly along the lines of a podcast has not been useful in the past, so they're trying to be more informal. In response to these statements during the Ujima staff meeting the director stated, affirmingly, that the member team "can always get the material (interviews, conversations, etc.) and then later decide what to do with it" (Field Notes, Trip 3)</i>
On-the-spot learning invitations	<i>During the investment outreach member team meeting one person raised the concern that the risk [of investing] isn't so much how much money to invest, but more about what Ujima is doing to support businesses they fund. In response to this concern one of the staff posed the question to the group 'does anyone want to learn how to talk about mitigating risk?' One of the members volunteered and said they could facilitate this part of the next investment workshop. (Field Notes, Trip 1)</i>
	<i>One of Ujima’s staff went over its standard ground rules during the beginning of its weekly member meeting as is the practice before each weekly meeting. However in this case she rushed through them a bit and didn't fully explain all of them. When she was finished, a prospective member attending the Ujima meeting for the first time asked about what a number of the items meant. She handled the question by answering it in part, but mostly proceeded to ask members in the audience to answer instead by putting the questions to them. They responded in kind and answered the initial questions. (Field Notes, Trip 3)</i>
	<i>Ujima hired a consultant, also one of their members, to develop a Women of Color Caucus event. The consultant was present at one of Ujima’s internal staff meetings for the purposes of planning the event and was discussing with staff who should give the introduction to Ujima at the beginning. Should it be the director or another staff or maybe even the consultant herself. The director mentioned that “she enjoys is when non-staff talk about Ujima” and the decision was made that the consultant would do the introduction” While the consultant seemed hesitant, the director reassured her that she would be in the back of the room and also attending the event and could fill in any additional details. (Field Notes, Trip 3)</i>
	<i>There was discussion during the Investment Outreach Member Team meeting in Jan 2019 that eventually members could organize their own investment workshops with Ujima’s support. The staff member coordinating the member team is creating a “how to guide” for the team with info on running investment outreach workshops, including agendas and tools, etc. In June and August Investment Outreach team members host two investor “house parties”, which are exclusively run and planned by members and attended only by members or interested investors. No staff are present. They were using the materials developed by the staff member coordinating the member team. The members running the house parties are adept at explaining Ujima, the importance of investing and not being afraid of it and the importance of voting. (Field Notes, Trip 1)</i>

Table 7. Relinquishing Authority Tactics

Tactics	Description of Data
Yield to member perspectives	<i>The podcast member team had decided to do a podcast on the topic of “local economic mysteries” for things that are taken for granted and considered part of the local economy within disadvantaged communities, but that people might not think about like ‘why do you have 100 chiropractors in one space, but no grocery stores?’. When the team was recording the podcast, one member was interviewing another member and a staff member was handling the microphone and recording logistics. The member speaking made reference to “marginalized communities” [while recording the Ujima podcast]. During a pause before the second take of the recording, the staff member present commented to the Ujima member to “be more specific than just saying ‘marginalized communities’ so like say Mattapan specifically”. The member responded and said she didn't want to do that because “I don't want to call out those businesses</i>

	<i>specifically". The staff member responded by saying "Oh! It's your podcast!" and deferred to her. (Field Notes, Trip 3)</i>
	<i>During the investment outreach member team meeting a comment was made by one of the staff that it makes sense if you want to do investor organizing that you yourself invest first. One of the members present pushed back on this stating that she didn't agree with this and felt that while she herself might not invest she felt that she could convey to others why it made sense for them to invest. The staff member didn't say anything in response to this remark, but I observed that she was annoyed by the members' comment. (Field Notes, Trip 1)</i>
	<i>Despite feelings from staff that the Investment Outreach Member Team and the Outreach Member Team should remain as separate groups, they eventually merge into one member team (archival data)</i>
	<i>During the Community Standards Committee meeting [mix of staff and members] one of the members asked if everyone's approval should be needed to push a business through for inclusion and approval to join the business alliance. Another member said there should be consensus because if there isn't then maybe someone on the committee might know something that should come out about the business. Staff didn't comment and let the decision made by members about unanimous approval for including businesses in the business alliance stand. (Field Notes, Trip 3)</i>
Decrease involvement in member-led activities	<i>One staff commented that "[the founder] was originally pretty involved in that team [Timebank Member Team], but then, very much just stepped back and was like 'you guys got this' and they did." (Interviewee 2, Interview 1)</i>
	<i>Staff coordinator is stepping back from her role coordinating the Investment Outreach Member Team. "I feel like it's a moment where I can step away...I feel like we are in a place where my pieces can be held by other people" (Interviewee 3, Interview 2)</i>
	<i>Staff were all happy that the Podcast Member Team meeting went well and things were finally moving forward for the team. The founder made commented that it seemed like they [Podcast Member Team] had been "stalling" for a while and seemed relieved (he took a deep breath and sat back in his chair putting his arms over his head in a relaxed gesture) that they seemed to have found their footing and were moving forward. (Field Notes, Trip 3)</i>
Deescalate offers of support	<i>The director said the staff wanted to make the offer to the team [of having Ujima's new Arts & Culture fellow coordinate the Arts & Culture Member Team], "but not to put that on them" (Field Notes, Trip 3)</i>

Table 8. Extending Authority Tactics

Tactic	Description of Data
Solicitation	<i>There was a discussion during the staff meeting about what provider to use for retirement. Staff commented that Vanguard seemed to be the best choice even though they all acknowledged that it was a "crappy" option from a socially responsible investing perspective, however "there aren't great alternatives". The founder commented that they should ask the Financial Education Member Team to think about potential alternatives. (Field Notes, Trip 1)</i>
	<i>At one weekly staff meeting staff wrestled for nearly forty-five minutes on the content and layout of materials for members announcing their first Ujima fund investment. At one point the director asked "how does this [document] help me [as a member] know they [organization receiving the investment] can pay back the loan? Are the terms 'debt' and 'equity' too much jargon [to include]? The fund manager responded by saying that Ujima should just "be transparent" with the terminology it uses. The founder added that they should think of the investment in terms of "what does this mean for members?" and to orient materials around that. He also wondered if was useful for members to see the Investment Committee (IC) questions and the answers from the organization? He suggested tabling the discussion to get back to other points on their meeting agenda, but before doing so staff decided to get member feedback on the documents in order to move forward and discussed a few names of more curmudgeonly members to talk to [to use as a point of reference] (Field Notes, Trip 2)</i>
	<i>Staff add a "co-direct" portion to the weekly member meetings occurring once a month in place of the standard "co-learn" portion of the meetings. During this time, staff present on the details of their work and</i>

	<i>staff meeting conversations and invite members to comment and provide input on decision-making. (archival data)</i>
Shifting external representation	<i>"...so I had the good fortune to go to a conference in New York...at that point I wasn't an Ujima staff member, but, like a member, member and on member teams, so I went on behalf of Ujima [to attend the conference] or as a member of Ujima" (Interviewee 1, Interview 1)</i>
	<i>Ujima staff attend a multitude of conferences and speak at various events as representatives of Ujima in order to get the Ujima name known in various circles such as amongst impact investing professionals. In one instance, there was yet another opportunity to do firm-level outreach for Ujima. After concluding that none of the staff were available, staff decided to see if one of their members could represent them instead. (Field Notes, Trip 3)</i>

Table 9. Member Participation in Community-Facing Work

Type of Engagement	Description of Data
Coordinating Logistics with Staff	<i>"So each time the timebank team wanted to make a flyer, like 'hey, we have a timebank now' or, umm, 'hey, we need people to do this, this, and this' or 'hey we want to do an assembly at the citywide assembly that just happened' we would of course work with Ujima staff to coordinate that and work through that." (Interviewee 1, Interview 1)</i>
	<i>"Yeah. So, we don't do formal blurbs now [in the newsletter about each member team], but if there's something going on and, like, the faith organizing team is like having an event, then yeah. It's small enough that, like, people know to ask me to put things in the newsletter or on Facebook. It's kinda informal still." (Interviewee 2, Interview 2)</i>
	<i>At the Community Standards Committee Meeting it was decided that committee members or Ujima staff could do the initial intake of information from businesses interested in joining the business alliance, but then staff would do the "chasing-down" of any additional information needed or for any holes in the process. (Field Notes, Trip 3)</i>
	<i>One of the members of the investment outreach member team was taking notes during the investor house party to share with Ujima staff. At the staff meeting they went through the notes and talked about all of the points including the ideas and opportunities for suggestion. (Field Notes, Trip 3)</i>
	<i>In tracking the work of the timebank member team from January to August using observational and interview data I found that staff did not intervene for any particular reason. Instead, they followed their progress through updates provided by staff attending monthly member team meetings and coordinated with them on logistical topics and consulted on the development of the timebank guidelines at the behest of the members. (Field Notes, all)</i>
Consulting Staff	<i>They [member teams] meet outside of our meetings on their own at like JP Licks with their computers. Like this really happens. On like zoom people will be like 'hey, financial education team is here, we have a question'. (Interviewee 5, Interview 1)</i>
	<i>"Umm, it [the exchange rate set for the timebank] was in conjunction with...approved by Ujima. Approved meaning this doesn't go against the Ujima guiding principles, but it was a completely sort of a member decided thing." (Interviewee 1, Interview 2)</i>
	<i>It's like this is what Ujima as a whole has decided is important to us [referring to the development of guidelines for the timebank] and then let's execute that and by executing that we'll interact with Ujima staff from a logistical standpoint and then also, sometimes, from a principles standpoint, 'like, is this really aligned with what it is that we want to be doing and what the community's stated goals are? And things like that' (Interviewee 1, Interview 2)</i>
	<i>In tracking the work of the timebank member team from January to August using observational and interview data I found that staff did not intervene for any particular reason. Instead, they followed their progress through updates provided by staff attending monthly member team meetings and coordinated with them on logistical topics and consulted on the development of the timebank guidelines at the behest of the members. (Field Notes, all)</i>
Drawing on Member Expertise	<i>"I'm honestly not sure how much transactions are happening right now [in the timebank], so there's like a whole question that whole group has been trying to figure out. Like, how do we get people to use this more? I heard they [the Timebank Member Team] had somebody come into their meeting who's sort of an expert in this stuff, and shared, umm, this idea of a spectrum between volunteerism versus mutual</i>

	<p><i>aid...so, they're experimenting with shifting the framing to be more of the mutual aid framework, so it doesn't feel like I'm just giving my time away, but it's like, no, this is really a strategy for improving your own life. And, so I'm curious to see how that plays out. But, I don't think it's been that active, to be honest. Like, I think conceptually people like it, but then when it comes down to it, it's hard to get people to actually use it.” (Interviewee 7, Interview 2)</i></p>
	<p><i>A solidarity member on the Investment Outreach Member Team who does racial equity training in a professional capacity presented a proposal in writing to do a white reparations funding study group as a way to engage solidarity members further around the concept of reparations and investing. One member commented that solidarity members being able to invest and then giving-up control to voting members is reparations oriented. The team really liked the idea and felt the proposal was in good shape and ready to send to the director, communications organizer and member organizer. The following day at the weekly staff meeting the director responded a report out from the member team meeting and the proposal by saying “now, that I like!” (Field Notes, Trip 3)</i></p>
	<p><i>The Podcast Member Team recently did a Podcast training with an organization that one of their members works for. A staff member shared at the weekly staff meeting that one thing the member team learned from the training is that no one is a podcaster until you just do it a lot, so you need to just practice. This related to a reference made during the Podcast member team meeting about “learning by doing”. (Field Notes, Trip 3)</i></p>
<p>Mirroring Staff Behaviors</p>	<p><i>A comment was made by a member during the Investment Outreach Member Team mtg that they needed a core group from the committed and then they can get work done and won't have to worry so much about turnover. The idea was raised to have point people willing to represent Ujima at outreach events as sort of a right of first refusal arrangement. (Field Notes, Trip 3—reframing and increasing structure tactics, balancing authority)</i></p>
	<p><i>One of the members on the Investment Outreach Team suggested making a list of actionable things that team members can do as part of the team (i.e. you can engage by doing house parties, outreach events, etc.) in order to help members who are not active (or just all members in general) plug in easily to support their work . (Field Notes, Trip 3—increasing structure tactic, balancing authority)</i></p>
	<p><i>When the Investment Outreach Member team was discussing what type of outreach to do a few members made the point that they should go to events where people are already gathered that are their audience (i.e. members) instead of organizing their own thing on the side. I noticed this was a similar strategy employed by staff when they were trying to engage both current and prospective members (Field Notes, Trip 3—reframing tactic, balancing authority)</i></p>
	<p><i>At the Investor House party there was a discussion amongst attendees, which included members and potential members, about how Ujima was having difficulty getting the votes they needed to reach quorum. One working-class, black woman said “they [staff] should call and text everyone [to get them to vote]” (Field Notes, Trip 3—one-on-one appeals tactic, exercising control)</i></p>
	<p><i>During the investment outreach member team meeting in August there was a conversation about how to engage other members of the team better. When thinking of potential solutions, members recalled how the staff member who used to coordinate the team would send personal emails or texts when she was there. Later during the same meeting, a staff member volunteered to help them go through the email list for the team [approx. 38 ppl on the list]. The staff member (who was unaware of the previous conversation) also said that doing one-on-one coffees with people is good to get to know people and might be more successful than just sending a mass email (Field Notes, Trip 3—one-on-one appeals tactic, exercising control)</i></p>
	<p><i>One of the staff made a comment during a member team meeting that they “wasn’t a big fan of white feminists”. Other than myself there were three others (all members) present--two white females and a black female. (Field Notes, Trip 2)</i></p>
	<p><i>During a later staff meeting, the same staff member made the comment that one of the white women who had been at the member team meeting had approached her to say that she was offended by the comment and that it had rubbed her the wrong way. The staff member said she spoke with the member and explained that what she meant by that wasn’t about individual white feminists, but about white feminism as an approach such as feminist movements associated with Hilary Clinton or Sheryl Sandberg who don’t include people of color in their calculus. The staff member shared openly in the meeting that she</i></p>

	<i>appreciated the member speaking out because it's part of the Ujima process to hold these open spaces and conversations (Field Notes, Trip 3—value proclamations tactic, exercising control)</i>
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