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Explaining Effectiveness in Local Civic Associations

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Abstract

Why are some civic associations more effective at developing leaders, engaging members and advancing their public agendas than others? This paper reports initial findings from a study of local Sierra Club organizations. We introduce a new multi-dimensional framework for analyzing the comparative effectiveness of civic associations in terms of public influence, member engagement, and leader development. This framework builds on diverse strands of theoretical and empirical work including that by organization scholars on effectiveness and leadership, sociologists on social movements, political scientists on interest groups, and industrial relations on labor unions. Conventional wisdom and prevailing theoretical expectations across disciplines holds that organizations benefiting from a favorable environment and abundant resources will be most effective. We assess this view finding some modest support for it, and we develop then assess the viability of an alternative framework focusing on leadership and the organizational activities that leaders carry out to build capacity and implement their programs. For each of our outcomes, we find strong evidence supporting our claim that effectiveness in civic associations depends to a large degree on leadership and what organizational leaders do to build capacity and implement program activities.

For much of our history, civic associations have served as schools of democracy for the millions of Americans to whom they taught leadership skills, democratic governance, and public engagement. Civic associations rooted in a membership to whom they are accountable, in governance by elected leaders, and in a commitment to public advocacy not only make claims on public officials but teach the practice of democracy itself by engaging citizens in working together on common goals. In fact, many have argued that the recent trend replacing such associations with professional advocates and professional service providers has eroded valuable civic infrastructure (Putnam, 2000; Skocpol, 2003). But not all civic associations are in decline. Some continue to thrive as they develop leaders, engage their members and influence public life—and afford scholars the opportunity to learn why they work when they do.

Given the important role of civic associations in American democracy, surprisingly little research addresses the question of why some are more effective than others. Although the question of organizational effectiveness has been addressed by organization scholars for the last three decades, much of their work has focused on private, public, and nonprofit organizations that produce goods or provide services. The fact that their core activity consists of selling products or delivering a service distinguishes them from civic associations in the very ways that have made them “schools of democracy:” accountability to members, election of leaders, and claims making in the public arena.

However, scholars who do study civic associations have rarely addressed the question of organizational effectiveness. Instead, these scholars often root their work in the study of social movements (sociology), civic engagement (sociology and political science) interest groups (political science), or labor unions (industrial relations) and focus more narrowly on the

environmental conditions—resources and opportunities—that facilitate success, most often defined as policy influence. When these scholars do attempt to explain effectiveness they focus most often on the resource abundance and favorable environments as determinants of effectiveness. This overlooks the crucial roles played by the leadership of civic associations including their values and experience, the ways they organize themselves, and their program activities designed to advance their goals.

In this paper, we examine the differential effectiveness in local environmental organizations. To do so, we introduce the contours of our broader project and our multi-dimensional framework for effectiveness that includes leader development, member engagement, and public influence. Our study - National Purpose, Local Action (NPLA) – allows us to examine these questions with comprehensive data from the Sierra Club’s 62 state or regional chapters and 343 local groups. In this paper, we examine variation in leader development, member engagement and public influence assessing the extent to which resources and opportunities, on the one hand, and leadership and the activities they carry out, on the other hand, shape the effectiveness attained by local civic associations.

The Question of Organizational Effectiveness

Although evaluating the effectiveness of civic associations ought to be of critical interest to scholars and practitioners, few studies have focused on this question. Studies of organizational effectiveness that have focused on other types of organizations have nevertheless generated important tools upon which we can build. Thus, we begin by bringing together the work of organization scholars showing its relevance to scholars studying social movements, interest groups and civic associations.

Effectiveness became a focus of intense interest to organization scholars during the 1970s (Webb, 1974, Pennings 1976; Cunningham, 1977; Kanter & Brinkerhof, 1981). Initially, scholars argued that effectiveness could be evaluated in terms of *goals* (Georgopolouos & Tannenbaum, 1957; Etzioni, 1964; Perrow, 1965; Price, 1968; Campbell, 1977; Hall, 1978), but debated whose goals were relevant and how best to measure them. Another group of scholars argued that accomplishing goals was a poor measure of effectiveness since organizations could accomplish goals even if they were not very “effective” organizations (Campbell, 1977). These scholars argued that examining organizational *capacities*, such as resources, staffing, and structure is required to understand effectiveness (Mahoney & Frost, 1974; Yuchtman & Seashore, 1967). Often, however, the connection between capacities and outcomes is quite murky, making this method of measuring effectiveness difficult. Others argued organizational effectiveness is best understood as the degree to which the organization satisfies its *constituencies* (Hirsch, 1975; Katz & Kahn ,1978; Scott, 1978; Bluedorn, 1980; Connoly, Conlon, & Deutsch, 1980). But since one organization often has multiple constituencies that could be at odds with one another, the question remained of which constituency counted. Finally, in the wake of neoinstitutional analysis (Meyer & Rowan, 1979; DiMaggio & Powell, 1983) some argued that effectiveness was a matter of *legitimation* in the public arena (Yuchtman & Seashore, 1967; Meyer & Rowan, 1978). Each of these definitions of effectiveness left important questions about just what effectiveness is unresolved. In fact, the unresolved nature of these questions led one scholar to argue that the ambiguity of the concept of effectiveness simply reflected the paradoxical nature of effective organizations (Cameron, 1986).

Beginning in the 1980s, scholars began to question the utility of the search for a universal measure of effectiveness—arguing that effective was more of an expression of value than an

objective phenomenon (Goodman, Atkin, & Schoorman, 1983). Because most organizations have a wide diversity of goals, capacities, and constituencies, scholars argued that more complex, most often multi-dimensional, measures of effectiveness were required (Lewin & Minton, 1986; Doty, 1993). This result led some scholars to shift their focus from effectiveness to “performance”, even as scholarship on the components of effectiveness has continued unabated, (Hirsch & Levin, 1999).

Meanwhile the study of effectiveness as such has relocated to scholarship on service-providing non-profit organizations. This may reflect new interest in non-profit accountability and governance from both non-profit funders and the public (Herman & Renz, 1993; Sowa & Selden, 2004).

Scholarship on civic associations, on the other hand, has either ignored internal influences on organizational effectiveness, focusing on the influence of the environment, or conceptualized it in a uni-dimensional way, focusing exclusively on policy goals, rather than on those associated with leaders or members. In terms of understanding the effectiveness of civic associations in general, this focus on the external environment overlooks the membership as the ultimate source of legitimacy in democratic organizations (Wilson, 1973). Because elected leaders make key organizational decisions, their effectiveness depends at least in part on political relationships among leaders and between members and leaders. At the same time, in terms of goals, ignoring the membership also ignores the status of goals related to members and leaders, thus constituting measures of effectiveness itself. Instead of examining the internal dynamics of leadership and organization, for example, many social movement scholars focus on explaining success based on the role of favorable or unfavorable environmental conditions such as the availability of allies, the strength of the opposition, the availability of resources, and

opportunities that may exist (McCarthy & Zald, 1977; Tarrow, 1998).

Students of interest groups examine interest-group roles in policy networks, in organizational fields, or as sources of information and money for legislators (Smith, 1995; Heinz et al., 1993; Walker, 1991; Laumann & Knoke, 1997; Langbein, 1993; Ainsworth 1993; Austin-Smith, 1993; Austin-Smith, 1995), using as proxies for organizational effectiveness patterns of interaction with outside actors or prestige in the policy environment (Heinz et al., 1993; Laumann & Knoke, 1987). To the extent these studies explain effectiveness, they do so only in terms of policy outcomes without taking into account the way the organization's own membership and leadership influence it.

Those scholars who do argue that organizational structures, resources, and practices can differentiate effective from ineffective organizations, rarely consider the influences of leadership (Key, 1956; Wilson, 1973; Gamson, 1976; McCarthy & Zald, 1977; Jenkins, 1983; Walker, 1991; Andrews, 2004). Although a few scholars argue that leaders' decision processes, and the decisions they make, critically influence organizational success, their analysis is usually based on single-case studies rather than on cross-sectional studies of comparable organizational units (Burns, 1978; Ganz, 2000; Baker, Johnson, & Lavalette, 2001; Morris & Staggenborg, 2002).

Thus, the question of why some civic associations are more effective than others remains largely unexplored, particularly with respect to that which makes them uniquely civic: members, elected leaders, and public advocacy. Organizational scholars have developed multi-dimensional definitions of effectiveness, but they have focused primarily on bureaucratic organizations that produce goods or provide services. Conversely, studies of civic associations by scholars of social movements, civic engagement, interest groups, and unions rarely consider internal organizational dynamics or have they developed multi-dimensional definitions of effectiveness.

This paper and the project more broadly attempt to move in exactly this direction. Although we draw on research on the effectiveness of for-profit and non-profit organizations to develop more complex definitions of organizational effectiveness, we focus on membership-based civic associations, building on insights from studies of social movements, interest groups, and unions to understand their unique features. In doing so, we develop a multi-dimensional definition of organizational effectiveness in civic associations and apply this conceptualization to local groups of the Sierra Club.

In sum, our study moves beyond the dominant individualistic focus in most work on participation in civic associations. Given that there are distinct theoretical and empirical literatures from multiple disciplines for each of the outcomes we consider, this paper builds synthetically across these fields. We build on a prior tradition that combined a focus on the formal organizational structure and internal processes and located organizations in a broader context including relations to other organizations, the state, and relevant constituencies. We also locate our work in relation to more recent work that examines the effectiveness of civic association in terms of goal accomplishment and the creation of collective capacity. Finally, we incorporate disparate strands of research on leadership – including work on motivations, networks, learning, and leadership practices - into our broader explanatory framework.

A New Conception of Effectiveness in Membership-Based Civic Associations

We examine organizational effectiveness through a multi-dimensional approach, by considering outcomes that combine the accomplishment of goals with the creation of capacity, and that can be used to compare across organizations. In this section we introduce our conceptualization of effectiveness and discuss how it contributes to our understanding of what

organizations do and how well they do it.

We assess organizational effectiveness along three dimensions that take into account the multi-dimensional aspects of civic associations, including, but not limited to, public influence. Because civic associations have members, they also pursue goals related to their membership and to the leaders who engage that membership. Based on these considerations, we assess civic association effectiveness along three dimensions: (1) leader development, (2) member engagement, and (3) public influence. Public influence refers to the extent to which an organization achieves its goals with respect to the public. In our case, we examine the contributions of Sierra Club groups to the protection of the environment based on action in their communities. Member engagement is the degree to which the organization engages members in the activities of the group, thus influencing the individuals involved and, through them, the broader community. By leader development, we mean the extent to which the organization enhances the motivation, skills, and practices of current leaders, such as recruiting, training, and developing new leaders.

The strengths of this approach are, first of all, that it is multi-dimensional, recognizing that civic associations pursue multiple goals against which to evaluate their effectiveness as public, member, and leader outcomes. Second, our approach considers outcomes that combine the accomplishment of goals with the creation of capacity. Finally, in a related vein, we focus on organizational goals or outcomes rather than on the success or failure of a particular campaign or project. In this way, we can compare organizations that have much in common but may differ on key issues or substance of the priorities they pursue allowing us to develop a more general theoretical understanding of effectiveness.

How have we sought to explain variation in the effectiveness of local Sierra Club organization? Our analysis for this paper is designed to assess prevailing explanations which emphasizes organizational context and resources relative to an argument that focus more closely on leadership, organizational capacity, and program activity. We begin by considering the two most predominant factors used to explain the effectiveness of civic associations: abundant resources and a favorable environment. Beginning with the organizational environment, the two most salient factors for civic associations are the political context – whether an organizations works in a politically supportive environment – and the civic context – whether an organization operates in a community with a high density of civic organizations. In terms of resources, a widely held view holds that resources are necessary for civic association to achieve desired goals. Most crucial for civic associations are financial resources and members.

We have measured context three ways - all of which tell a similar story: First, we use objective measures such as voting patterns and the number of civic groups in a community. Second we calculate the member density as the number of members in a group's territory per capita – the concentration of Sierra Club members in the community. And third, we use the chair's assessment of allies, opponents, and local government based on specific questions with the chair of each group. There is much variation on each type of measure, and, more importantly, we find that they are highly correlated with one another. In this paper, we use our measures based on the chair's assessment of the civic and political context in most analyses. Resources compose our second major set of explanatory factors, and we consider two straightforward dimensions – human (membership) and financial (revenue) resources.

Leadership includes five separate dimensions – the size of a group's leadership, their background including sociodemographic characteristics and experience, their values and

motivations, the quality of the leadership team's governance, and the collective efficacy of leaders. Experience is a source of learning and is conceptualized as the way elected leaders learned to do their job – including tenure, formal training, on the job training, and coaching and mentoring from peers and staff. The quality of a leadership team's governance – how it deliberates and carries out its work - is a critical component of how the organization works and its effectiveness. Our primary measure incorporates specific indicators assessing the quality of both deliberation and implementation. Group efficacy is the extent to which ExCom members believe their group to be competent at fulfilling required tasks – a factor which may enhance motivation and their likelihood of tackling challenging projects and goals.

Movement scholars typically focus on the public activities of organizations to ask whether particular strategies or tactics are more or less likely to succeed, but organizations must build their own capacity to sustain themselves and grow over the long haul at the same time that they seek to influence the public. Capacity building refers to activities intended to enhance an organizations skills, solidarity and resources. These activities include programs to recruit leaders, engage new members, enhance leadership through training and retreats, and raise funds to support their work. Leaders also build and sustain active committee structures to serve these purposes and carry out their public program activity. Finally, as a leadership team, organizational leaders vary in whether or not they prioritize capacity building when they make decision and implement programs.

Finally, we focus on program activities. In the Sierra Club, programs include the specific conservation, electoral, and outings activities that groups do. Conservation refers to efforts to shape the public and political agenda through activities like lobbying, holding educational events, and organizing marches or demonstrations. Electoral activities include efforts to

influence elections for candidates or ballot initiatives mobilize voters and making endorsements. Outings are activities designed to bring people into natural settings for social, recreational and service purposes such as a group hike or trail restoration project. We focus on the quantity and range of activities that groups do expecting that groups with more vibrant programs will be more effective at leader development, member engagement and public influence.

The Sierra Club: A Comparative Case Study

The Sierra Club provides an excellent setting for studying the effectiveness of state and local organizations within a broader national association because of its prominence, multi-tiered organizational structure, variation in performance, and openness to academic inquiry. First, we provide relevant background on the organization's history and structure followed by a more methodologically driven discussion of the Sierra Club as a case study.

Historical and Organizational Overview

The Sierra Club is based in San Francisco with another major office in Washington, D.C. and 27 regional offices throughout the United States. Although it was founded in 1892, the modern Sierra Club grew in three distinct waves of growth after World War II. By the end of the 1960s, it had grown from six California Chapters to 32 chapters spread across the country. During the 1970s, the number of local groups grew from just three to 174. And finally, during the 1980s, individual membership grew from 181,000 to 600,000, and today reaches 750, 000.

The national club is governed by a fifteen-person board of directors elected by the membership at large. The Sierra Club's 62 chapters are divided roughly into one chapter per state. The main exception is California, where twelve chapters are coordinated by a single state-

level lobbying organization that serves as an intermediary between the California chapters and the national organization. There are also 343 local groups that are each affiliated with a chapter, although the number of groups per chapter ranges from 0 to 17. Each chapter is governed by an elected Executive Committee (ExCom) that includes representatives of each local group in its territory. Local groups, in turn, are governed by their own locally elected ExCom. The mean size of a chapter ExCom is 12.5 members, and the mean size for a Group ExCom is 7.1. The National Board conducts organizational business through seven governance committees and numerous subcommittees, a committee structure the groups and chapters emulate.

[Insert Figure 1. Sierra Club Structure of Chapters, Groups, and Elected Leaders]

Although membership dues flow directly from individuals to the national organization, a portion of the dues from members in their areas go to chapters, based on a subvention formula. Chapters may or may not distribute funds to their local groups. Chapters and groups also engage in local fundraising to support their activities and projects.

The Sierra Club distinguishes its programs as conservation work (campaigns, lobbying, advocacy to protect habitat, pass legislation, public education, etc.), as outings (hiking, camping, trail maintenance, etc.), as electoral activities (endorsing candidates), and as efforts intended to strengthen the organization itself (training, recruiting, fund raising)—work it carries out at the national, state, and local levels. The national organization is thus what Shaiko (1999, p.44) calls a “full-service public interest organization” that pursues a wide range of activities and goals. Although the parent organization, as a 501(c)(4), can endorse national candidates and engage in electoral activities in local communities, the Sierra Club conducts its business through a variety of related entities that include the Sierra Club Foundation, a 501(c)(3); the Sierra Student

Coalition; Earth Justice Legal Defense Fund (formerly the Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund); and Sierra Club Books.

Case Study: The Sierra Club

Our study is both a single-case study of the Sierra Club and a multi-organizational study in which we make systematic comparisons across the numerous local sub-units of the Sierra Club. As a case study, our research is situated within an important tradition of single-organization studies central to this field of political organizations, including Michel's *Political Parties* (1915); Lipset, Trow, and Coleman's *Union Democracy*, (1956); Selznick's *TVA and the Grassroots* (1966); Kanter's *Men and Women of the Corporation* (1977), among many others. A major strength of these studies was their ability to delve deeply enough into the workings of one of a broader class of organizations-either because it was representative or because it was an outlier-to discern the key mechanisms at work.

We also follow scholars who hold the organizational context constant to conduct cross-sectional analysis of variation in units of the organization (Webb, 1974; Pennings, 1976; Hammer & Waseter, 1993) Examining the public influence of advocacy groups poses the methodological challenge of conceptualizing and measuring appropriate indicators of effectiveness and assessing the causal impact of organizational characteristics alongside rival explanations. With this approach, we can develop a comparable measure of effectiveness by discerning relationships between individual, organizational, and environmental variables and organizational effectiveness. It would be far more difficult, for example, to compare effectiveness of local units of the NRA, AARP, and SEIU.

For example, several important studies of interest groups were based on surveys

administered to a random sample of organizations (Walker, 1991; Schlozman & Tierney, 1986; Knoke, 1990). In these studies, as well as case studies of specific organizations or movements (Rothenberg, 1992), researchers focused on questions such as the recruitment and retention of members and the acquisition of financial resources (Baumgartner & Leech, 1998). But they have not simultaneously examined the effects of this variation on the influence of these organizations because of the difficulty of developing a common metric across organizations with very different political objectives and programs.

In this case, we have the opportunity to systematically analyze variation across over 300 groups, each of which is responsible for its own governance, but within a broader federated framework. As Figure 1 shows, the multi-tiered structure of the Sierra Club allows us to examine local variation within a common national framework of overlapping national, state, and local components, with comparability across organizations in the composition of their leadership, their resources, practices, performance, and process. This creates an opportunity for analytic leverage by allowing us to identify and understand major sources of variation. Second, by studying numerous local entities, we have in-depth measures of the internal practices of these groups and can compare the effect of those practices, as well as the impact of varying social and political contexts on an organization's ability to generate meaningful influence.

We find wide variation in the effectiveness of Sierra Club groups in terms of leader development, member engagement, and public influence. Overall, although only a small fraction of Sierra Club members participate in local organizations, some local organizations engage their members much more fully than others in their conservation campaigns, outings programs, electoral work, and organizational leadership and activism. We have also identified major variation in the broader characteristics of Sierra Club's groups and chapters, such as the

backgrounds of their leaders, their goal-setting and strategic practices, the extent and focus of activities, and their access to financial and staff resources. Moreover, local Sierra Club organizations are located all states and in cities of widely varying size and characteristics. In sum, analyzing the sources of this variation in organizational characteristics, contexts, and effectiveness allows us to determine why some state and local units are more effective than others.

Thus, we can think of our study in two distinct but complementary ways. First, it is a detailed case study of an important national organization. Second, it is a multi-organizational study that gains analytic leverage from variation among over 400 local units and the communities in which they operate.

At the same time we have to ask of what is the Sierra Club a case? We have argued that civic associations are distinguished by the fact they are membership based, governed by elected leaders, and pursue civic goals. In addition, the Sierra Club is a federated organization, a form of organization of particular recent interest to scholars because of the way it combines local action in a national framework (Oster, 1996; Aspen, 1999; Skocpol, Ganz, & Munson, 2000). Historically many organizations developed a multi-tiered structure as a way to combine local action with national purpose—at the same time, grounding national action in local purpose—a structure that continues to be used by influential contemporary organizations such as NOW, the NAACP, the NRA, SEIU, most trade unions, the Audubon Society, the League of Women Voters, and MADD. At the local and state level, the local units of national federated organizations constitute a crucial set of actors because of their visibility and connections to other localities and to national politics through the larger organization (Andrews and Edwards 2005).

The Sierra Club is funded by members who pay dues and elect local, state, and national officers.⁵ State and local units, although not distinct financial entities, are self-governing, choose their own leaders, and conduct their own affairs within a broader national framework. The Sierra Club was established neither to market products nor deliver services but to “enlist humanity to protect the environment and enjoy the natural world.”

Although historians, sociologists, and political scientists have studied the Sierra Club, they focused on the national organization, leaders, and campaigns rather than on the organizational infrastructure of local groups and chapters (Brulle, 2000; Cohen, 1988; Devall, 1970; Dunlap & Mertig, 1992; Gottlieb, 1993; Shaiko, 1999), a focus that characterizes studies of other major environmental organizations as well. Similarly, prior studies conducted internally by the Sierra Club have sampled individual members or leaders for their opinions and characteristics, but offered little insight into the organization’s overall structure as a multi-tiered organization (see Devall 1970 for an important exception).

The Sierra Club’s role as a major environmental organization increases the visibility and relevance of our findings. For example, in a recent analysis, Amenta and his colleagues (2005) collected coverage of social movement organizations in the *New York Times* and *Washington Post* for the entire twentieth century, and they examine which organizations received the most media attention by each decade. The Sierra Club was one of the ten most-covered organizations in the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s gaining far more coverage than any other conservation or environmental organization. Social movement scholars regard environmentalism as an exemplar of contemporary social movements. These characteristics include a reliance on direct

⁵ In 2002, dues from regular and life members constituted 28.6% of the Sierra Club’s revenue. The proportion of revenue from member dues is greater than any of the other national environmental organization for which there is comparable data such as the National Wildlife Federation, National Audubon Society, Ducks Unlimited, Center for Health, Environment and Justice, Earth Island Institute, and the Rainforest Action Network (Bosso 2005, 109-110).

membership recruitment, the relative affluence of movement supporters, reliance on relatively routine or non-disruptive tactics, and the centrality of post-material values to their mission (Berry, 1999; Meyer & Tarrow, 1998; Putnam, 2000). Even though the Sierra Club is not representative of national environmental organizations or the movement as a whole, it has played a critical role throughout the movement, and it has changed in ways that reflect broader shifts in environmentalism, including its structure and programmatic activities. Most importantly, the Sierra Club combines characteristics of the older form of three-tiered civic associations based on federated state and local groups with the newer form of organization reliant on direct marketing to support a broad environmental agenda at the national level (Skocpol, Ganz, & Munson, 2000).

Finally, the Sierra Club's openness to academic inquiry makes this research possible. The opportunity to study an influential organization like the Sierra Club with the full cooperation of its leadership permits a much richer understanding than more typical studies that rely on fragmentary evidence. The depth of the Sierra Club's commitment to learning is reflected in their willingness to make the findings and insights from this study and the data collected publicly available to benefit other organizations and the broader scholarship on these questions. The Sierra Club's leaders have devoted enormous time to the development and implementation of this project which accounts for the breadth and quality of the data.

Research Design Overview

We initiated the National Purpose, Local Action (NPLA) project in the summer of 2003 as a result of discussions with Sierra Club leaders concerned about the unrealized potential of their 750,000 members, 343 local groups, and 62 chapters. Conversations within the Sierra Club began in December 2002 when its Organizational Effectiveness Governance Committee formed

the “Bowling Together” task force to assess the Club’s social capital and identify barriers to its growth. Given limited information on local organizations within the Sierra Club, the task force asked fundamental questions that could only be answered by collecting, analyzing, and reflecting on new information. This initiative is the most recent in a series undertaken by Sierra Club leadership to strengthen the effectiveness of local groups and chapters including efforts to encourage an activist culture, improve communications, offer organizer training, and provide resources to encourage local participation in national campaigns. Unlike earlier initiatives, however, the NPLA project has begun to create a new framework for learning from the experience of chapters and groups, how they do their work, and the reasons some are more effective than others.

The study is thus based on a newly created dataset that we designed and collected in cooperation with the Sierra Club. The unit of analysis for this project is each group and chapter with a particular focus on the elected Executive Committee (the ExCom). All of the Sierra Club’s U.S. groups and chapters were included in the study, except for those that were in reorganization in September 2003.⁶ For this paper, we will only present data on groups because groups and chapters differ in important ways including their scope, staff support, and governance. We conducted two major surveys between October 2003 and March 2004. Overall, we draw on four different sources of data to provide a comprehensive view of the Sierra Club, integrating local organizational data with community-level and individual-level data to distinguish different sources of variation within the Sierra Club. We describe each of our four data sources below, and the process we used for collecting the data. Gathering this amount of data with consistency and timeliness required this innovative, challenging, but ultimately highly

¹ Reorganization status refers to organizations that do not meet minimal standards, such as an elected ExCom, and that are receiving assistance from the national organization to reestablish the organization in a community.

rewarding approach.

(1) *Interviews with ExCom chairs focusing on organizational structure, activities, and efficacy.* From October 2003 to January 2004, we conducted 50-minute telephone interviews with 368 chapter and group executive committee chairs focusing on questions of organizational structure, leader and member participation, activities, networks, practices, community assessments, and effectiveness. The University of California at Berkeley's Survey Research Center conducted these interviews, and we achieved a 90.6% response rate. This data provide us with an in-depth, systematic overview of the Sierra Club's organization. Potential respondents received a letter from the PIs and three national volunteer leaders describing the project and interview to prepare them for the call.

(2) *Written surveys with Executive Committee members on background, leadership, and organizational practices.* The 15-page ExCom Leader Survey (ELS) was completed by 1,624 ExCom members. The surveys were completed prior to participation in local meetings to assess organizational practices. Volunteer facilitators gathered ExCom members together for a facilitated self-assessment discussion about the ExCom as a whole. Each session took approximately three and one-half hours and was conducted from October 2003 to February 2004. Sessions were based on the aggregation of key elements of data gathered in the individual surveys and reported on by individual ExCom members. Similar to the survey, the meetings were divided into topical discussions that paralleled the issues raised in the ELS. These sessions were thus data-based, facilitated self-assessments that allowed us to gauge how the ExCom collectively understood its own processes of decision making and organizational practices. Within the ExComs that held a self-assessment meeting, 68% of ExCom members completed the survey, as did 51% of all ExCom members. The survey includes closed-ended and open-ended

questions on the background, leadership experience, goals and motivations, and organizational practices of local leaders, as well as their evaluation of the practices and efficacy of their own ExCom. The survey focused on the following broad topics: (1) how individuals become engaged in the Sierra Club and how they engage others; (2) how ExComs prioritize their goals and objectives; (3) how ExComs conduct strategic deliberation; (4) how ExComs organize to implement their plans and deploy their resources; (5) how ExComs define the success and failure of its projects; (6) how leadership operates within the group; and (7) the demographic characteristics of the leadership. We use this data both to characterize individual leaders and aggregate it to assess the leadership of each Group and Chapter.

(3) *Secondary data available from the Sierra Club.* We were provided extensive data on Groups, Chapters, and members compiled by the Sierra Club for a variety of organizational purposes such as membership size, average tenure, leadership size and positions, financial resources and expenditures, and staff positions. These indicators have allowed us to assess the validity of our survey measures with independent information thereby increasing our confidence in the data collected from our survey instruments.

(4) *Secondary data on community context.* We have constructed measures of demographic, economic, political, civic, and environmental characteristics of the community in which Groups and Chapters work. This data is derived from the U.S. Census and other relevant sources. The boundaries of Groups and Chapters are defined by a set of zip codes. For 2000 Census data we aggregated measures at the zip code level to the appropriate group and chapter boundaries, and for other sources we matched data on the appropriate county, municipality or state.

Measures of Effectiveness

We now introduce our measures of organizational effectiveness. We briefly summarize each dimension of leader development, member engagement, and public. By leader development we mean enhancing the motivation, skills, and practices of current leaders. Member engagement is measured by the degree to which members participate in the activities of groups. Public influence refers to the contributions of Sierra Club groups make to protection of the environment based on action in their communities. Although organizational effectiveness can be difficult to evaluate, especially in not-for-profit organizations, we find that groups vary widely on all three of these measures. Some develop leaders, while others do not. Some engage their members, while others do not. And some claim to wield public influence while others do not.

Leader Development

Leader development is critical for civic associations, especially volunteer organizations, because the task at all levels requires motivating people to work together, dealing strategically with dynamic and changing contexts, and adapting to the novel and challenging circumstances that accompany the work of advocacy. One way to assess leader development is to evaluate the relational, motivational, and strategic skills individuals develop in the course of their work as leaders with the organization (Oberschall, 1973; Ganz, 2000; Burns, 1978; Cohen & March, 1986; Thorlindsson, 1987; Simonton, 1988; Hackman, 2002; Ganz, 2004a, 2004c; Fiorina & Shepsle, 1989). Volunteer-led organizations that alienate potential leaders, undermine their confidence, or reduce their motivation are less effective than those that enhance their leaders' knowledge and skills, increase their sense of efficacy, and increase their motivation. In recent years, scholars have begun to pay attention to ways organizations can structure themselves and

develop practices that encourage mentoring, coaching, and other internal forms of leadership development (Day, 2001; Collins & Holton, 2003; Rousen & Renelt, 2004).

In prior work we drew important distinctions between attitudes and skills and made further distinctions within each of these categories: Specifically, through factor analyses we identified three motivational attitudes: satisfaction, commitment, and self-efficacy and three kinds of skills: managing self, others, and tasks. Because we are interested in developing a more comprehensive view of organizational effectiveness, we have constructed a single indicator of leader development that incorporates these components. Although the single indicator used here misses some of the nuances from our prior analyses, it is important to note that the major patterns are similar when we turn to more fine-grained analyses of attitudes and skill development.

Our measures are derived from surveys completed by the elected leaders serving on Executive Committees. Component measures were constructed similarly. In each case an individual leader assessed his or her attitudes on 21 distinct items and skills on 19 items. See Appendix Table A1 for the specific items. For example, the skill items asked leaders to “Please indicate whether your leadership skills have improved through your service as a volunteer in the Sierra Club” on a scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree); and whether “I am better at” relevant skills such as “delegating responsibilities to others,” “raising money,” or “speaking in public.” With our 21 attitude measures, we asked elected leaders to “Please take a moment to think about how you feel about your experience as a volunteer leader in the Sierra Club,” and asked them to describe “how much you agree with each statement ranging from “strongly disagree” (1) to “strongly agree” (5). We conducted factor analyses using the individual response to facilitate the construction of three scales for satisfaction, identification, and efficacy. We ran factor analyses separately for attitudes and skills constructing a summary measure for

each. We then combined these two measures to construct a single leader development scale that measures both the leadership skills acquired and attitudes they possessed.

Member Engagement

While some contemporary and past organizations have recruited members through their local units, this is not the case for the contemporary Sierra Club. Since the 1980s the Sierra Club has engaged in extensive direct marketing of membership throughout the United States. Membership itself may serve as an index of the environmental orientation of a particular community, but membership is not an appropriate indicator of the local organization's ability to engage people in its work. Although interest in joining the Club may be related to local activities for which the group is responsible, the group itself does not recruit members, making it a poor gauge of its effectiveness.⁷

Instead, we measure the extent to which those who are members participate actively in the work of the organization. Active membership participation not only enhances the work of the organization, but can extend its influence within the community by engaging a broader segment of that community in club activities (Knoke, 1990). Members who participate in group deliberations are also more likely to commit to the outcome of that deliberation, making success more likely (Black & Gregersen, 1997). Through face-to-face interaction, experiences of reciprocity and norms of trust participation in organizational activities can also generate social capital within the group that can enhance its overall effectiveness (Putnam, 1993). Finally, for civic associations, member engagement may be viewed as a good for its own sake.

⁷ The Sierra Club does have a program to encourage local groups recruit members, but this program generates a small proportion of total membership size.

Civic associations seek to involve their members in their activities both as an end itself and a way to enhance an organizations' capacity for achieving other goals. Much has been written about the proliferation of paper membership—members who pay dues but have no face-to-face interaction with other members (Putnam 2000; Shaiko 1999; Skocpol 2003). This form of participation could be used to characterize a large segment of the Sierra Club's membership. However, relative to other major environmental organizations, the Sierra Club has especially high levels of participation. One survey found that 10% of Sierra Club members considered themselves active in their groups, and 15% reported participating in an outings activity (Shaiko 1999).⁸ By comparison, approximately 20% participated in the most recent and highly contested election for the national board. More important for our analysis is the fact that there is significant variation among groups in local and national forms of member engagement, suggesting that differences in leadership, organization, or local context may influence the level of member engagement.

Our primary indicator of engagement is the degree to which members participate in group activities. Like many other civic associations, Sierra Club organizations have more members than participants. Although participation can take many forms—ranging from participating in an organized hike to serving as an elected officer—we focus on the number of individuals who participate on a regular or time-to-time basis. Our measure is based on two questions asked in our phone interview with the chair of each local organization. We asked the chair to estimate the number of people who participate regularly in the activities of the group, and we asked the chair to estimate the number of people who participate from “time-to-time”. Our measure is the sum of these two estimates logged. The average group has 34 participants, and the median is 24. Not

⁹ These estimates are based on a survey conducted in 1978 with members of five major environmental organizations. Thus, these estimates preceded the dramatic growth in Sierra Club membership that occurred during the 1980s, so current levels of engagement are probably lower than these estimates.

surprisingly, participation varies widely across groups as is the case for all forms of participation.

Public Influence

Although public influence is a matter of winning battles over public policy, court cases, and elections, it also involves recognition by policy makers of the organization as an authoritative advocate and serving as a valued source for public opinion. As with leader development, in our initial analyses we identified separate components of public influence. Specifically, we distinguished between the influence that Sierra Club groups achieve in three major arenas of advocacy, community, and elections. Advocacy refers to effectiveness at advancing conservation objectives where the major target is influencing public policy through elected officials and government agencies. Community influence refers to effectiveness at influencing public opinion and debate and gaining support from other civic groups in ones community. Finally, electoral influence refers to effectiveness at influencing the election of candidates that the Sierra Club endorses. For this paper, we have aggregated these measures constructing a single indicator of public influence. The three components of our summary scale were standardized then weighted based on the loadings from a factor analysis. As with leader development, the summary indicator loses some nuances but provides a more concise way of identifying the factors that generate greater levels of public influence.

We report our initial measures of public influence in this paper based on self-reports of organizational leaders, using 22 questions assessing the influence of their local group in political, community, and electoral terms. We developed measures corresponding to these three arenas based on 22 items included in our phone interview with chairs of Sierra Club groups. ExCom chairs evaluated how accurately each statement described their Group or Chapter where 1

indicates “not very accurate” and 5 is “very accurate.” Detailed descriptions of the items are presented in Appendix Table A2.

Analysis

Having described our three measures of effectiveness, we turn to our analyses discussing each in turn. We begin with leader development followed by member engagement and public influence.

Leader Development

From the standpoint of analysis, leader development presents the greatest challenge. This is because elected leaders are nested in their ExComs, and leader development is a product of both individual and group level factors. Thus OLS and related measures are not appropriate techniques. Instead we use HLM (Hierarchical Linear Models) which allows us to examine both individual and group level covariates. We used a random intercept model to produce unbiased and efficient estimates. The GLLAMM procedure in STATA was used to estimate the random intercept models.

[Table 1 About Here]

Table 1 presents results from three separate models. The first model considers major demographic characteristics of leaders as well as resources, context and program activity. Income and education are inversely related to leader development. This could be because individuals with less income and education have more to gain in terms of skill enhancement or

attitudes such as personal efficacy. On the other hand, age has a positive relationship to leader development. Leaders in groups with more members and financial resources report higher levels of leader development. Similarly, those in more favorable civic and political contexts report greater leader development. Finally, leader development is greater for leaders in groups with a stronger conservation program; we suspect this is because of the learning that derives from organizing conservation activity.

Model 2 introduces more refined measures of leadership including indicators of the values and experience of leaders as well as the quality of the governance they engage in. Appendix Tables A3 and A4 list the items included in the values and governance measures respectively. Values and experience are measured at the level of individual leaders from question items from our ExCom survey. We constructed scales based on factor analyses (details available from the authors). We asked each ExCom member to evaluate the influence of each of 18 reasons for having become active in the Sierra Club on a scale from 1 to 5. We then identified three major themes: changing the world to protect the environment, enjoying the world in the company of others, and fulfilling one's potential. For each individual, we measure their value orientation on these three separate dimensions. Governance quality is based on items from the same individual survey, but we used these items to construct collective indicators for each group based on the items reported in Table A4. Further discussion of the construction of group measures is available in the appendix text. We evaluated the deliberative side of governance based on the performance of specific practices aggregated as goal setting, planning, decision-making, adaptation, meetings, and inclusiveness. Similarly, we evaluated implementation in terms of practices of collaboration, delegation, accountability, rewards and recognition, establishing shared norms, and initiative taking. We expect these organizational practices to

enhance leader development and also encourage greater member engagement and public influence. In Model 3, we assess whether capacity building and group efficacy encourage leader development.

Turning to the results in Model 2 and 3, we find that some of the demographic characteristics are no longer significant once we take the values and experience of leaders into account. Most notable is the effect of education. In addition, the resource, context, and program measures have reduced effects in Model 2. The value orientations of leaders are important predictors of leader development. World-changing and self-fulfilling orientations have especially strong positive effects on leader development. In addition activist and leadership experience enhances leader development as those with longer tenure and holding more positions experience greater leader development. Both formal support (training) and informal support (from other leaders and staff) encourage leader development. We find that leaders in groups with stronger governance quality experience greater leader development. Well governed groups generate leaders with greater motivational attitudes such as commitment and efficacy and greater skills in working with others and carrying out core organizational tasks.

Member Engagement

With member engagement, we use OLS regression models to estimate the logged number of participants in Sierra Club groups.⁹ In Table 2 we introduce models beginning with a baseline model that includes measures of resources and context. Model 2 includes measures of capacity building. Model 3 adds measures of leadership, and Model 4 brings in measures of program activity.

⁹ We have also uses negative binomial regression in some prior models, and we have used a measure estimating the proportion of participants rather than the count. These alternative measures generated results with similar substantive interpretations.

[Table 2 About Here]

Model 1 suggests that participation is contingent on abundant resources but has little relationship to the civic or political context. Other indicators such as the chair's assessment of political support in the community or the density of Sierra Club membership have no impact on participation in separate analyses (not reported here). This result runs counter to expectations of political opportunity theory which would anticipate favorable context to encourage participation. The findings with membership and financial resources do support expectations of resource mobilization theory. The interpretation for the number of members is straightforward that a larger pool of participants. Financial resources may enhance the ability of association to develop programs that attract wider participation.

Turning to Model 2, when we add measures of capacity building the effect for financial resources is wiped out. Groups that have a better functioning internal structure, that prioritize the development of the organization itself, that take greater responsibility for generating their own financial resources, and have community building activities, mobilize greater participation. While some might argue that these relationships are driven by access to greater funds, we believe the stronger argument is that an organization with greater internal capacity will be able to secure more funding in a variety of ways. Moreover, local fundraising through public events is an important way to engage people in the organization and articulate the purposes of the organization to a broader audience.

Model 3 adds leadership measures to the model. As we would expect, having more leaders as core activists who play a key role in conservation and electoral work and outings

leaders who create recreational and solidaristic activities increases levels of participation. Adding leadership controls away most of the effects of organizational capacity, but this is to be expected. Group leaders are the ones who are generating capacity and running activities. Also of note, while we might expect organizations whose leaders have strong network ties to other environmental organizations would do a better job of mobilizing participants because of their potential access to relevant and beneficial information and resources, we actually see a strong negative effect of Sierra Club ExCom members being leaders in other environmental groups as well. While network ties are certainly helpful, leaders also need the time, energy, and focus to generate organizational capacity and produce high quality activities. Dividing one's leadership energy between two or more organizations may substantially inhibit one's ability to achieve these goals in either group.

Adding activity in Model 4 shows a strong, positive effect. When it comes to mobilizing participation, it is not surprising that doing more activity – both conservation and outings activity – nets more participants. Activities provide the opportunity for people to become involved. It is important to note that, even with activity in the model, organizational capacity continues to have an independent (if more muted) effect. Organizations with greater capacity and leadership will do more activities (hence the reductions in the coefficients for capacity from model 2 to model 3 and 4), but they will also do their activities better and will create an internal environment more conducive to regular participation. Retention of participants over time is facilitated by capacity, and retention is crucial for higher levels of overall participation.

In sum, we find that conventional explanations of mobilization that focus on context and resources are insufficient. Context plays no apparent role, at least as operationalized here, and resources play a limited role at best. Financial resources are trumped by the organizational

capacities that generate them. Having more “people resources” available, however, provides a modest benefit to participation. More important than either context or resources, are features internal to organizations themselves. Internal organizational capacity, activity level, and leadership drive mobilization far more than external factors and dramatically improve our ability to explain differences in participation across Sierra Club Groups.

Public Influence

With public influence we use the summary indicator described above based on our interviews with the chair of each local group. In Table 3, we begin in Models 1 and 2 by examining the impact of resources and context on public influence. The civic and political context has a significant positive effect on public influence while membership and financial resources have weak positive effects.

[Table 3 About Here]

In model 3 we introduce measures of leadership – specifically, the number of core activists who play a central role in advocacy and group efficacy which measures the extent to which leaders believe their group to be competent at fulfilling required tasks. Both have positive effects on public influence. Given that core activists are also an important factor in our explanation of participation, we want to highlight the potential significance of focusing on this key group of leaders for enhancing effectiveness more broadly.

Models 4, 5 and 6 introduce key measures of capacity building – specifically, the number of active committees, the amount of organization building activity such as retreats and training,

and community building activity such as social events and celebrations. Groups have greater public influence that build active committee programs and regularly sponsor activities to enhance community and organizational skill. We introduce these measures separately because with a relatively small sample size these models are sensitive and statistical significance is undermined when these measures are entered simultaneously. The factor underlying these measures is the explicit effort to build organizational capacity. This suggests that being influential is more than choosing the right tactics or making the right arguments. Rather, organizations that focus on building capacity realize gains in the public arena.

Finally, we turn to program activity finding that all three of our measures – conservation, election, and outings – have significant and positive effects on public influence. The positive effect of outings programs on public influence is most surprising. Arguably, a successful outings program can yield greater public influence by bringing greater attention to environmental issues, enhance the legitimacy and recognition of the organization, and engage more people by drawing them in to the less political aspect of the organization. The results for conservation and elections are, perhaps, less surprising. However, we note that the effect for program is independent of context and resources – at least, as measured here. Even in hostile environments, groups exert influence by developing successful programs that engage the public and authorities.

Discussion Conclusions

This study of the Sierra Club's organizational effectiveness contributes to ongoing debates about the role of civic associations within sociology, political science, and organizational behavior. Although a new and fruitful dialogue has begun between social movement and organization scholars, we believe that both fields will benefit from a more sustained examination

of the processes within organizations such as governance and capacity building and the leaders who carry out the work of organizations including their backgrounds, motivations, and experience. Moreover, this study provides a model for making research more useful to organizational actors, a development that might encourage organizational leaders to be more open to researchers - especially those studying civic associations, social movements, and interest groups.

Like most large, national civic associations, the Sierra Club has wide variation in the performance of its local organizations. Some leaders gain valuable skills and motivations through their work while others become discouraged. Some groups involve hundreds of members in their activities while others have less than ten. Finally, some groups wield significant leverage in their communities by shaping public debate, influencing elections and public policies.

Many scholars and influential theories would direct our attention to context that groups operate within and the resource inputs that groups enjoy. This is a reasonable place to start and our analyses show some support for these expectations. Groups with more members generate greater participation, and those working in more favorable political environments do report greater influence. However, our models with these resource and context factors explain a very small amount of the variance in leader development, member engagement and public influence, and they miss a large and important part of the story. Our more important contribution in this paper is to show the viability of examining leadership, capacity building and program activities as determinants of organizational effectiveness across distinct outcomes.

Appendix: Response Bias and Aggregation of Individual Surveys

Overall, the response to our phone survey and ExCom leader survey were remarkably high, minimizing the likelihood of significant nonresponse bias. However, we undertook a comprehensive analysis to assess possible bias in our datasets. To assess response bias, we drew on the secondary Sierra Club data. Since this data included information on all the groups and chapters, we could assess the extent to which participating groups differed from those that did not participate on key organizational characteristics: (1) the number of individuals holding leader positions in the group, (2) the number of ExCom members, (3) the percentage of ballots returned in the 2003 National Board election, (4) the number of members in the group, (5) the average leadership tenure, (6) the average number of leadership positions held by each individual leader.

In evaluating our phone interviews with group chairs, we compared the means of participating groups to non-participating groups and found no statistical difference between them on any of the six indicators. We evaluated the ExCom Leader Survey (ELS) in the same way. We compared ExComs for which we had ELS data to ExComs for which we did not on the same six dimensions. We found that non-participating group ExComs had slightly smaller leadership cores than those that participated. Thus, our ELS data is slightly biased because the group ExComs that participated tended to be the ones with larger leadership cores. (Results of these analyses are available from the authors.)

In sum, our response bias analysis gives us confidence in the data. While some parts of the data are biased against smaller ExComs, on the whole our data is representative. Because we have a clear understanding of the existing bias, particularly the ESAS data on Groups, our interpretation of the data will be stronger. Finally, a research design that includes multiple data sources, most of which are unbiased, allows us to buttress our claims through triangulation.

Another challenge we faced in using ELS data grew out of the fact that although individual leaders completed the survey, we are primarily interested in the collective assessment by ExCom members of their group. Therefore, we had to avoid the situation in which the opinion of a single ExCom member—if he or she were the only one to fill out the survey—could be taken as the collective judgment of the whole group. To determine whether groups with high rates of participation differed from those with low rates of participation, we conducted a response bias analysis using several measures of demography and leadership commitment. We found that ExComs with 50%, 60%, 70%, 80%, and 90% response rates were statistically indistinguishable from ExComs with 100% response rate on these dimensions. We thus included data from any ExCom with at least a 50% response rate from its ExCom members. Further, to ensure that we do not draw conclusions about the ExCom from too few surveys, we included in our analysis only ExCom with three or more respondents. We thus had sufficiently complete data on 182 (53%) ExComs to include them in our analysis of questions relying on aggregation of assessments of individual ExCom members as reported in the ELS.

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Figure 1: Structure of the Sierra Club's Volunteer Leadership

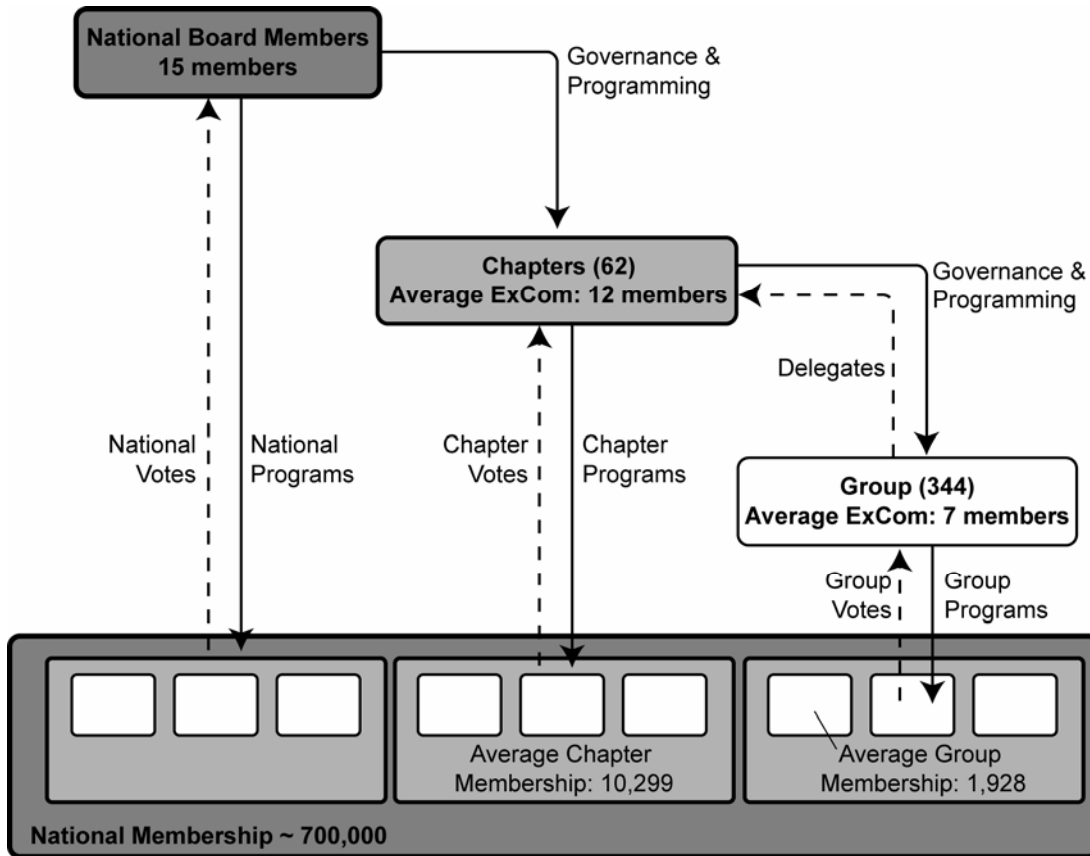


Table 1. Coefficients for Regression on Leader Development in Sierra Club Groups

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Individual-Level Covariates				
LEADERSHIP				
Male	0.017 (0.039)	0.032 (0.029)		0.029 (0.029)
Age	0.005** (0.002)	0.000 (0.001)		0.000 (0.001)
Income (baseline=\$50,000-\$99,999)				
-\$29,000	0.105+ (0.057)	0.070 (0.043)	0.090* (0.042)	0.064 (0.043)
\$30,000-\$49,999	0.125* (0.050)	0.109** (0.038)	0.119** (0.038)	0.106** (0.038)
\$100,000-	-0.054 (0.055)	-0.060 (0.042)	-0.056 (0.042)	-0.062 (0.042)
Education (baseline==graduate degree)				
Some college or less	0.172** (0.065)	0.077 (0.050)		0.076 (0.050)
College	0.064 (0.049)	0.046 (0.037)		0.040 (0.037)
Some grad training	0.072 (0.058)	0.016 (0.045)		0.017 (0.045)
Values				
World-changing		0.194*** (0.026)	0.198*** (0.026)	0.182*** (0.027)
Self-fulfilling		0.124*** (0.023)	0.133*** (0.023)	0.126*** (0.023)
Socializing		0.043* (0.019)	0.038* (0.018)	0.041* (0.019)
Experience (activist tenure, logged)		0.049* (0.019)	0.052** (0.018)	0.047* (0.019)
Leader positions (logged)		0.085*** (0.026)	0.087*** (0.026)	0.084*** (0.026)
Training Program Participation (logged)		0.071** (0.023)	0.070** (0.023)	0.071** (0.024)
Sources of Help & Support				
Relies on other ExCom members		0.119*** (0.016)	0.118*** (0.015)	0.114*** (0.016)
Relies on staff		0.067*** (0.020)	0.066*** (0.020)	0.065*** (0.020)
Group-Level Covariates				
LEADERSHIP				
Group Efficacy				0.061 (0.045)
Governance Quality		0.258*** (0.040)	0.260*** (0.037)	0.192*** (0.055)
CAPACITY BUILDING				
Active Committees, Total (logged)				-0.022 (0.030)
Community Building Priority				0.047 (0.039)
PROGRAM				
Conservation Activity	0.482*** (0.055)	0.068+ (0.036)	0.063* (0.032)	0.055 (0.038)
Electoral Activity	-0.116** (0.043)	-0.003 (0.026)		0.002 (0.027)
Outings Activity	0.045 (0.037)	-0.025 (0.023)		-0.021 (0.023)
Resources				
Membership (logged)	0.218*** (0.026)	0.031+ (0.017)	0.036** (0.014)	0.035+ (0.018)
Revenue (logged)	0.024+ (0.014)	-0.001 (0.008)		-0.002 (0.008)
Context				
Community Assessment	0.070* (0.035)	0.029 (0.020)		0.016 (0.022)
Constant (individual)	-0.751*** (0.032)	-0.954*** (0.027)	-0.948*** (0.027)	-0.957*** (0.027)
Constant (group)	0.235*** (0.031)	0.000 (0.032)	0.000 (0.035)	-0.000 (0.031)
N (individual)	701	701	701	701
N (group)	185	185	185	185
Log-likelihood	-527.238	-325.921	-329.984	-323.944

Table 2. Coefficients for Regression on the Number of Participants in Sierra Club Groups

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
CONTEXT				
Political Liberalism (% votes for Gore 2000)	.000 (.000)	.001 (.005)	.004 (.005)	.002 (.004)
Civic Activity (per capita environmental groups, logged)	.015 (.015)	.025 (.065)	.060 (.061)	.056 (.059)
RESOURCES				
Financial Resources, Revenue (logged)	.094** (.030)	.039 (.028)	.021 (.027)	.009 (.026)
Membership (logged)	.172** (.065)	.141* (.061)	.067 (.059)	.102† (.058)
CAPACITY BUILDING				
Active Committees (logged)		.234** (.088)	.090 (.088)	-.011 (.091)
Organization Building Priority		.228* (.099)	.090 (.102)	.131 (.099)
Fund-Raising (% of budget from local fundraising)		.372* (.158)	.358* (.147)	.297* (.147)
Community Building Activity		.198** (.066)	.078 (.066)	.046 (.064)
LEADERSHIP				
Core Activists (logged)			.264** (.076)	.193* (.076)
Outings Leaders (logged)			.187** (.067)	.149* (.071)
Governance Quality			.136 (.140)	.080 (.136)
Leader Networks (% of ExCom leading other env. groups)			-.365† (.219)	-.460* (.215)
PROGRAM				
Conservation Activity				.376** (.107)
Outings Activity				.139† (.080)
Constant	1.53† (.855)	.491 (.830)	1.25 (.819)	.246 (.833)
Adj. R-Squared	.1191	.3114	.4009	.4433
N	174	174	172	170

Note: Coefficients are unstandardized OLS coefficients. Standard errors are in parentheses.

†p<.1 *p<.05 **p<.01 ***p<.001

Table 3. Coefficients for Regression on Public Influence in Sierra Club Groups

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7
CONTEXT AND RESOURCES							
Chairperson Assessment of Civic and Political Context		0.51 *** (0.09)	0.44 *** (0.09)	0.44 *** (0.08)	0.43 *** (0.08)	0.44 *** (0.09)	0.40 *** (0.07)
Membership Size (logged)	0.19 * (0.08)	0.02 (0.08)	0.00 (0.07)	-0.05 (0.07)	0.06 (0.07)	0.07 (0.07)	-0.04 (0.06)
Financial Resources, Revenue (logged)	0.08 + (0.04)	0.09 * (0.04)	0.02 (0.04)	0.03 (0.03)	0.03 (0.03)	0.02 (0.04)	-0.02 (0.03)
LEADERSHIP							
Core Activists			0.65 ** (0.14)				
Group Efficacy			0.38 *** (0.12)	0.62 *** (0.13)	0.70 *** (0.14)	0.69 *** (0.14)	0.50 *** (0.11)
CAPACITY BUILDING							
Active Committees				0.51 *** (0.10)			
Organization Building Activity					0.26 *** (0.07)		
Community Building Activity						0.23 ** (0.08)	
PROGRAM							
Conservation Activity							0.71 *** (0.12)
Electoral Activity							0.38 *** (0.09)
Outings Activity							0.13 + (0.07)
(Constant)	-1.92 *** (0.53)	-2.15 *** (0.49)	-4.09 *** (0.60)	-3.55 *** (0.58)	-4.63 *** (0.59)	-4.69 *** (0.60)	-5.38 *** (0.54)
<i>N</i>	181	181	178	179	178	179	174
<i>Adjusted R-Squared</i>	0.065	0.204	0.357	0.411	0.372	0.354	0.583

Note: Coefficients are unstandardized OLS coefficients. Standard errors are in parentheses.

†p<.1 *p<.05 **p<.01 ***p<.001

Table A1: Leadership Skills and Attitudes Scale Items

Managing Self

listening to other people
 accepting responsibility
 thinking creatively
 accepting criticism
 managing my time

Managing Others

providing others with support to do their work well
 asking for help
 asking people to volunteer
 delegating responsibility
 coaching and mentoring others
 challenging others to be more effective
 holding others accountable

Managing Tasks

organizing and running a meeting
 working effectively with public officials
 working effectively in coalition
 speaking in public
 planning and carrying out a campaign
 working with the media
 managing internal conflict

Commitment

What the Sierra Club stands for is very important to me.
 I am proud to tell others that I am part of the Sierra Club.
 I get a lot of satisfaction from seeing others participate.
 I feel myself to be part of the ExCom in which I work.
 My work in the Sierra Club influences many aspects of my life.
 I often try to think of ways of doing my work on the ExCom more effectively.
 I really feel as if the ExCom's problems are my problems.

Satisfaction

My relations with other ExCom members are strained.
 My own creativity and initiative are suppressed by this ExCom.
 I enjoy talking and working with other ExCom members.
 The chance to get to know the other ExCom members is one of the best parts of working with the Group or Chapter.
 Working on this ExCom stretches my personal knowledge and skills.
 Working on this ExCom is an exercise in frustration.
 Generally speaking, I am very satisfied with this ExCom.
 I learn a great deal from my work on this ExCom.
 I enjoy the kind of work we do on this ExCom.

Efficacy

I have confidence in my ability to do my work in the Sierra club.
 Most people in my group can do this work better than I can.
 All in all, I'm satisfied with the work I am doing in the Sierra Club.
 I have all the skills needed to do my work in the Sierra Club very well.

Table A2: Public Influence: Scale Items**Advocacy Influence**

- State government leaders consult with us on environmental issues.
- Our efforts have placed important environmental issues on the political agenda.
- Our Group's [Chapter's] efforts have led to stronger enforcement of environmental standards and regulations.
- Local government leaders consult with us on environmental issues.
- Public officials take stronger stands on environmental issues because of our work.
- Local governments adopt new policies as a result of our advocacy.
- Our Group [Chapter] has helped to delay or block efforts that would have harmed the environment.
- Officials at public agencies consult with us on environmental issues.

Community Influence

- Our Group [Chapter] has been successful at raising awareness about environmental issues.
- The local media turns to us as an important spokesperson on environmental issues
- People in this area view our Group [Chapter] as a respected voice on environmental issues
- Our Group's [Chapter's] activities and positions are covered regularly in the local media.
- Our Group's [Chapter's] statements and reports influence public debate.
- Our Group [Chapter] is well known in the community
- Our Group [Chapter] is an important leader among community environmental groups
- We are key players in environmental policy issues in this area.
- Businesses leaders and groups know they have to deal with us on environmental issues.

Electoral Influence

- We help elect pro-environmental candidates that we endorse or support.
- Candidates for local office place a high value on our endorsement.

Table A3: Leadership Values: Scale Items***I am active in the Sierra Club...*****World-Changing**

- to protect the quality of the environment.
- to fight against the weakening of environmental policy.
- to work on local environmental issues.
- to be part of an org. that stands for right ideas.
- to influence public policy.
- to work with an effective environmental organization.
- to change the values and beliefs of the public.
- to work on national environmental issues.
- to access resources to make a difference.
- to make the SC stronger.

Social-Recreational

- to be with people who share my ideals.
- to be with people I enjoy.
- to explore outdoors.

Self-Fulfillment

- to have more influence on the direction of SC.
- to build skills that are valuable in other aspect of my life.
- to become a leader in my community.
- to gain recognition from people I respect.
- for the opportunity to further my job or career.

Table A4: Governance Practices: Scale Items

DELIBERATION	IMPLEMENTATION
<p>Goal-Setting</p> <p>Our ExCom has clarity about what we are supposed to do.</p> <p>All the members of our ExCom have a clear sense of what we are supposed to do.</p> <p>Our ExCom has explicit group discussions about whether or not to undertake a project.</p>	<p>Delegation</p> <p>My responsibilities are clearly defined in Group or Chapter projects.</p> <p>People (or groups) in charge of projects delegate responsibility effectively.</p> <p>I have people who are accountable to me.</p>
<p>Planning</p> <p>Our ExCom has clear gameplans to guide our projects.</p> <p>Our ExCom has explicit discussions about committing resources to achieve our objectives.</p> <p>Our ExCom considers multiple approaches to achieving our objectives.</p> <p>Our ExCom works collectively to develop our gameplans.</p> <p>Our ExCom considers particularly innovative ways to do the work.</p>	<p>Initiative</p> <p>I have room for the exercise of judgment or initiative.</p> <p>We have to make many “judgment calls” as we do our work.</p>
<p>Decision-making</p> <p>Our ExCom has a clear facilitator for discussions about particular projects.</p> <p>Our ExCom brainstorms alternatives before deciding what to do.</p> <p>Our ExCom has a clear decision-making process for choosing among alternatives.</p> <p>When our ExCom resolves conflicts, we all accept the resolution.</p>	<p>Collaboration</p> <p>I have to work with other members of a team to do my work.</p> <p>A lot of communication and coordination is necessary with other members to generate outcomes.</p> <p>I depend heavily on other members to get the work done.</p>
<p>Inclusiveness</p> <p>Our ExCom regularly consults with other Group or Chapter members in making decisions.</p> <p>People outside the ExCom participate in decision-making processes.</p>	<p>Accountability</p> <p>Our ExCom holds people accountable for doing what they say they will do.</p> <p>I feel accountable to someone (or group) to complete my responsibilities.</p>
<p>Adaptation</p> <p>Our ExCom has clear benchmarks for measuring our progress throughout our projects.</p> <p>Our ExCom avoids mindless routines, i.e. falling into patterns without noticing changes in the situation during our projects.</p> <p>Our ExCom evaluates our work partway through our projects.</p> <p>Our ExCom makes changes based on re-evaluation.</p> <p>Our ExCom evaluates our work at the end of projects.</p>	<p>Rewards</p> <p>Excellent performance pays off on the ExCom.</p> <p>The ExCom reinforces and recognizes individuals that perform well.</p> <p>Our ExCom recognizes all kinds of good work.</p>
<p>Meetings</p> <p>Our ExCom has an agenda for our meetings.</p> <p>Our ExCom invests time in celebrating our work.</p> <p>Participants in our ExCom feel comfortable disagreeing in meetings.</p> <p>Our ExCom meetings start and end on time.</p> <p>Participants come prepared for our ExCom meetings.</p> <p>Our ExCom meetings are productive.</p> <p>I feel energized at the end of our ExCom meetings.</p>	<p>Norms</p> <p>Expectations for member behavior on this ExCom are clear.</p> <p>We agree about how members are expected to behave.</p> <p>Our ExCom holds members accountable for meeting group expectations.</p>

Table A5: Program Activities: Scale Items

Conservation Program	Elections Program
<i>Public Advocacy</i>	Endorsing candidates/issues
Members Contact Officials	Mobilizing Voters
Members Write Letters to Editor	Promoting candidates to the public
Contacting Local Media	Recruiting volunteers for candidates
Attending Public Hearings	Sponsoring a debate/forum
Issuing press releases	Sponsoring Canvassing
Sponsoring petitions/tabling	
Participate in Community Events	Outings Program
Holding Press Conferences	Hiking/Biking Trips
Sponsoring Rallies/Marches	Sponsor Clean-up/Restoration
Presenting in Public Schools	Service Outing
<i>Leadership Advocacy</i>	Backpacking/Mtn. Climbing
Relating with other organizations	Technical Trips
Relating with community leaders	
Relating with public officials	
Meeting with government agencies	
Meeting with legislators	
Presenting at Public Meetings	
Relating with local media	
Meeting with advisory committees	
Relating with business leaders	
Participating in lawsuits	
Drafting policy/legislation	