As I write this book, climate change is regaining prominence on the international agenda. The emission of greenhouse gases continues unabated (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change 2013); United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon invited world leaders and heads of state to a special summit on climate change in September 2014; talks within the UNFCCC are aiming at a new negotiating deadline of 2015; and climate activists are having discussions about what to do at the next round of climate negotiations. They are reexamining their previous strategies and tactics. As a commentator in *The Guardian* boldly proclaimed after the Doha talks in 2012:

The lessons from Copenhagen must be learned . . . Climate change needs to become again a moral crusade. Global warming is a theft of the future from the children of today: anger and emotion must galvanise public concern . . . the debate around a new global agreement needs to be driven from the south of the world, giving proper expression to the demand for equity and “climate justice” . . . [heads of government] will need to feel the heat of a worldwide people’s movement breathing on their necks. There’s no other way. The countdown to 2015 has begun.

*(Jacobs 2012)*

This book contributes to this discussion by considering the role that civil society organizations play in global climate politics. I make three contributions that are relevant to scholars,
policy-makers, and activists. First, I have examined how the network of actors mobilizing on climate change has evolved over time. In Chapter 2 I demonstrated that while this network was small and cohesive for most of its history, it became substantially larger and more diverse in advance of the Copenhagen Summit. The network fragmented under this pressure, becoming much less cohesive than it once was. This fragmentation resulted in decreased communication and coordination of strategies among groups working at the Copenhagen Summit. The central argument is that the structure of networks influences the way that they perform.

Second, this book has explored how organizations choose their strategies when they sponsor collective action on climate change. In Chapter 3, I considered why some organizations chose to use protest strategies in Copenhagen while others did not. I examined this question using quantitative evidence, and I found that organizations tend to adopt protest strategies when their partners have already done so. Drawing on qualitative evidence in Chapters 4 and 5, I found that organizations harmonize their tactics with their peers due to information sharing, resource pooling, and social influence. The main theme of these chapters is that relationships between organizations have a large impact on tactical choices.

Third, I considered how civil society mobilization influences the trajectory of global climate change politics. I found that organizations in the divided network developed different strategic approaches. Many groups adopted contentious tactics, prompting the UNFCCC to become more restrictive in its dealings with civil society. A subset of groups also began to employ a climate justice frame, stimulating changes in the language with which states, the media, and other civil society organizations now discuss climate change issues. In Chapter 6 I demonstrated that the strategies employed by civil society groups influence global climate politics, even if this engagement sometimes produces unexpected consequences.

This conclusion will not extensively summarize my findings on these topics. Instead, I will reflect on my study and tackle three
broad questions. First, what does my examination of this case tell us about cooperation between civil society groups more generally? Second, what are the implications for global climate change governance? Third, what does the future hold for the transnational climate change movement?

UNPACKING TRANSNATIONAL ADVOCACY NETWORKS

This book examines an important transnational advocacy network. My approach treats such networks as relational structures. I describe the character and functioning of these networks by employing empirical network analysis. My work shows that organizations working in this sphere are embedded in networks of communication and coordination with other groups that share broadly similar values and principles (Keck and Sikkink 1998). But I also demonstrate that they often employ different strategies in pursuit of their objectives. The strategic choices of individual organizations are both enabled and constrained by their embeddedness in broader networks.

The network I study contains highly diverse groups and is marked by significant divisions between actors. Scholars have traditionally paid less attention to divided networks than to their more consensual cousins (but see Bob 2012; Hertel 2006; Johnson 1999; Maney 2001; Nelson 2002; Smith 2008). I argue that this focus has come at the expense of theoretical precision. We need to better theorize and investigate the relationship between network structure and collective outcomes if we are to understand how and when civil society groups become influential (see also Sikkink 2009; Murdie 2014; Hafner-Burton, Kahler, and Montgomery 2009).

This book takes a first step in this direction by examining a divided network in detail in Chapter 2. But there are many remaining questions that are best answered with comparative work. Do network divisions always translate into decreased performance? Is the strategy of “speaking with one voice” a sound approach? Under what conditions can different tactics
complement rather than compete with one another? Gathering comparable data about other network structures and outcomes would be useful for establishing the analytical purchase of my approach and explaining the variability in civil society influence across issue areas.

Acknowledging the diversity and fault lines within global civil society gives us a much more accurate picture of this realm of politics. Admittedly, it also complicates studies about the influence of these actors. My study makes it clear that we cannot simply study civil society participation in the UNFCCC as if the institution were the target of a single coordinated campaign. To borrow a metaphor from Sidney Tarrow (2005b), the UNFCCC functions more like a coral reef that attracts and supports a diverse ecosystem of groups. These groups pursue different strategies and demands. The cumulative effect of their advocacy has results above and beyond their individual actions.

This is a complicated picture, but one that likely describes other issue areas as well. How do we measure influence in such a context? My study focuses on two strategic innovations introduced by civil society actors and traces their implications in global climate politics. This process tracing approach has the advantage of allowing me to observe intended and unintended outcomes, but it is necessarily limited: not only am I unable to trace the implications of all of the strategic choices made in this context; I am also limited to considering those strategies that are relatively discrete and have easily observable implications. But my work also convinces me that developing methods to measure influence in these kinds of complex settings will constitute an important challenge for future research.

This book views global civil society as a complicated and often turbulent sphere of social relations. This view contrasts with earlier scholarship which tended to emphasize its cohesive nature (e.g. Florini 2005, 134; Wapner 1995, 261). My work suggests that the extent of cohesion among actors is highly variable. Like other skeptics of global civil society (Friedman, Hochstetler, and Clark 2005; Stroup 2012; Tarrow 2005b), I find that climate groups are divided in terms of their preferred tactics, substantive
understandings, and frames. This does not mean that these divisions are permanent: in fact, I do see recent signs of convergence in the network I study. But my case demonstrates that the cohesion of civil society actors needs to be an empirical question, not a matter of assumption.

Social network analysis holds particular promise because it allows us to measure the extent of cohesion among actors and compare organizational populations across issue areas and over time. It can also be used to identify the source of cleavages between actors. For example, the network I analyze in this book is divided between traditional environmental NGOs and those organizations originating in the global justice movement (Hadden 2014). The analysis reveals that this cleavage is not simply reducible to a north–south divide, echoing the assessment of other recent scholarship (Doherty and Doyle 2013; Bulow 2010). This type of cleavage is familiar to those who study the World Social Forum and the politics of international financial institutions (Smith et al. 2007) and is increasingly important to those who study international environmental politics as well. This kind of analysis is much needed, as understanding the issues that divide groups helps us to better appreciate the sources of conflict between groups and may point to useful strategies for promoting future coordination.

**Implications for Global Climate Governance**

This book also examines the variety of ways in which civil society organizations participate in global climate governance. Both scholars and policy makers have traditionally been optimistic about the beneficial consequences of civil society involvement in global governance. Scholars emphasize that civil society participation strengthens problem-solving and increases the legitimacy of governance arrangements (Dryzek 2000, 130; Florini 2000; Higgott et al. 2000; Lipschutz 1992; Princen and Finger 1994; Reinicke 2000; Scholte and Schnabel 2002; Willetts 1996; Young...
Policy makers often design institutions to be open to civil society groups with these benefits in mind (UNFCCC 1992; UNFCCC 2009).

But my observation of recent meetings suggests that there is a growing skepticism—originating both from within the NGO community and from states themselves—regarding the value of civil society groups’ formal participation in climate governance around the UNFCCC process. Civil society groups increasingly complain that opportunities for influence have become virtually nonexistent within the UNFCCC, causing participants to fear that their continued involvement may legitimize a process that has disregarded their input. And some state delegates complain (off the record) that civil society groups distract from the serious work of the negotiations, generating additional transaction costs in an already complicated process (see also Matthews 1997).

How can we maximize the benefits of civil society participation in global climate governance? I argue that we need to take into account civil society’s growing size and diversity in reimagining its role. Change is needed on two fronts. First, we need forums that can provide broader access and more deliberative opportunities for a wider range of actors. As Victor and Keohane (2010) have noted, the UNFCCC is only one part of a larger regime complex for the governance of climate change. As the climate problem is inherently beyond the scope of any one set of actors, the continued use of different venues and experiments for designing solutions and seeking input should serve to enhance the process of governing the climate (Ostrom 1990). For example, international forums like the World People’s Conference on Climate Change in Bolivia and the Rio +20 People’s Summit may become important venues for deliberation for social movement organizations. More technical venues, like the various subsidiary groups and financial mechanisms, may offer better opportunities for participation for other groups. Linking these venues will create opportunities for learning and knowledge spillover in this sphere. And a less exclusive focus on participation in the UNFCCC should decrease the mounting pressure on
this institution and may provide more meaningful opportunities for participation in global climate governance to a wider range of actors.

Second, civil society actors urgently need deeper engagement in existing institutions. As part of this process, the UNFCCC should carefully reconsider its rules and procedures for facilitating civil society participation. I document in Chapter 6 how this institution has become more restrictive in its dealings with civil society since Copenhagen. If this policy is intended to curtail protest and confrontational activism, it is likely to be counterproductive: increased policing, combined with diminished opportunities to provide input and comment into the work of the negotiations, is likely to drive groups further outside the negotiating process. If the reduction of opportunities for participation results in decreased civil society involvement, this may ultimately weaken the institution’s popular legitimacy and detract from implementation of any eventual agreement (Bernauer and Gampfer 2013, 439).

From this perspective, it is in the UNFCCC’s best interest to develop a mutually satisfactory system of civil society engagement before 2015. The UNFCCC has in the past attempted to expand participation to the largest number of participants as possible. This is becoming untenable. While unpopular, limits on the total number of participants are virtually inevitable for future meetings. Such restrictions can be made more palatable by developing equitable and transparent procedures to determine who gets access and why. But I suggest that future reform must also focus on improving the quality of participation for those who do secure access. For the benefits of civil society participation to be maximized, transparency within the UNFCCC will need to increase. Civil society groups need de facto access to most documents and meetings in order to bring their diverse knowledge to the table, and they need clear rules regarding the policies and penalties associated with protest actions in order to make decisions about how best to channel their activism. I suggest that focusing on these two areas of reform, in combination with opening up broader spaces for deliberation and
experimentation outside the negotiations themselves, will offer the best chance of securing meaningful civil society engagement in global climate governance.

THE FUTURE OF THE TRANSNATIONAL CLIMATE MOVEMENT

This book opens the door to a view of the internal relations of civil society as a distinct sphere of governance. Networks are not power free: they enable and constrain the choices of those actors working within them. As Scholte (2002, 298) points out, “civil society associations that deal with global governance issues can in some cases actively constrain discussion and suppress dissent.” In this case, as in others, some groups dominate agenda-setting and policy-setting (Carpenter 2014; Dalton and Rohrschneider 2002). Actors wield influence over one another, changing the overall strategic composition of the organizational population. Studying these intranetwork dynamics expands our understanding of how power operates within this fascinating and unexplored layer of social organization.

This book has documented two different models for how civil society might govern itself internally. Chapter 4 considered the Climate Action Network, one of the world’s largest civil society coalitions, which has been in continuous operation for more than twenty-five years. Chapter 5 explored the emergence of a more decentralized coalition of groups working under the banner of the climate justice movement. The analysis showed that the CAN model is much more formalized and contractual, whereas the climate justice model tends to be more fluid and self-reinforcing. The CAN approach generates buy-in from large organizations, but then must necessarily privilege the positions of these groups in its decision making. The climate justice approach is more consensual and horizontal, but requires enormous amounts of time and commitment to function effectively. Both models have significant challenges and limitations. But they both also represent generally successful attempts to mitigate the coordination problems that exist among groups working in this sphere.
Whether ultimately these two different coalition structures can learn to work together or to develop a new hybrid mode of internal governance will be fascinating to observe.

What does the future hold for the transnational climate change movement? This book documents how divisions emerged in the climate network at a critical moment – but there are reasons to believe these divisions may be bridged. I write this book at a time in which many civil society groups are regrouping for the next round of negotiations. As the Climate Action Network stated in a call for participation during its anniversary retreat:

After the Copenhagen Climate Summit in 2009, the climate movement lost momentum, and until now it has not regained that lost ground. But now, signs of a new uprising of the movement are taking shape. After several years of reflection and reassessment, civil society and other stakeholders have started to raise urgency around climate change again, bringing new energy and a different rhetoric to the climate debate.

(Climate Action Network 2014)

There are three main avenues by which the movement has evolved since Copenhagen. The first development has been the recognition of decreased opportunities for participation and activism around the UNFCCC. These restrictions amount to a significant closure of political opportunities, as lamented by many groups. As one explained:

After Copenhagen, security has been particularly by the book. The problem is, we never knew where the line was to begin with. The rules have never been that clear. People were getting kicked out without even knowing what they had done wrong. So it was very upsetting and really turned some people off.

(Interview, Climate Action Network 2011)

The perception that opportunities for participation in the UNFCCC are limited may drive groups to change their tactics. This could have two potential consequences. We may see large-scale protest become the norm at future high-profile conferences. If this prediction is correct, the tentative civil society walkout in Warsaw may presage a more contentious climate movement once
the UNFCCC heads to Paris for its 2015 meeting. It may also lead to more tactical similarity between the two sides of the network in the next few years, offering more opportunities for coordination and joint actions.

We may also see a shift in the targets favored by the movement. Climate activists increasingly perceive the UNFCCC as less central to the climate debate and have been targeting corporations, national governments, and individuals to a greater extent. As one campaigner explained it: “I think Doha was a real low point in terms of engaging with the UNFCCC . . . there were some clear limitations there. So it seemed clear that we need to scale down our activities there and work more on this movement building” (Interview, Oxfam International, 2013). The idea that the UNFCCC will not produce an acceptable climate change agreement – once considered a radical position even within the climate justice movement – now seems to be a fairly mainstream view. As an activist explained it to me, “it’s time for us to get over our Stockholm Syndrome” (Interview, Climate Justice Now, 2013). Activists may be moving on to other arenas of struggle on climate change.

Many activists have decided to focus more on domestic targets in the post-Copenhagen period. Scholars know that powerful transnational movements have deep roots in domestic politics (Bülow 2010; Tarrow 2005b); thus, building stronger domestic ties may allow the movement more flexibility when transnational political opportunities are closed off. It may also expand the resource base for future transnational action. The North American struggle against the Keystone pipeline is a good example of this kind of shift in targets. But this transformation does not amount to an abandonment of international activism. Many climate organizations have also been highly mobilized around the UN post-2015 Sustainable Development agenda, working to integrate climate concerns into broader discussions about sustainable development. And even those groups that have shifted to primarily domestic work have retained their international ties, making the potential for transnational mobilization an ever-present possibility.
Third, much of the current energy in the climate change movement – even among mainstream environmental NGOs – centers on making normative contestation the basis of broader movement building. As one campaigner explained to me, the convergence on the climate justice frame documented in Chapter 6 is central to this strategy:

I think what happened in Copenhagen was that a lot of NGOs – northern NGOs, us included – were working for a long time with a frame that was very technical and demotivating for a lot of people. And it was really based on a theory of change that “if we change our governments, we can change the system.” Climate justice is much bigger than that. Climate justice helps us build the movement.

(Interview, Friends of the Earth International, 2013)

Another explained that the goal is “to make coal the new cigarettes” and to debate the issue on a moral level, rather than by foregrounding science (Interview, 350.org, 2013). Scholars have previously documented how normative contestation has been a key strategy in many successful environmental campaigns, chief among them the anti-whaling movement (Epstein 2008; Peterson 1992). The climate movement’s ability to leverage this form of power will be an exciting issue to examine and a key strategy going forward.

The climate movement certainly faces a number of challenges. Central to the theme of this book is one of the movement’s key questions: how can climate change organizations best coordinate, given the incredible growth in their numbers and diversity? As Smith’s (2008a, 233) study of the global justice movement shows, movements are strongest when they both support diversity in positions and are able to form cohesive alliances (see also Khagram 2004). My study makes it clear that climate change organizations would benefit from more attention to their internal network governance. There is a critical need to invest in dialogue and brokerage to achieve desired ends. This does not mean that groups need to take the same action; the potential to trigger a radical flank effect remains open if groups can meaningfully coordinate tactics and goals (Haines 1984; Gupta 2003). But more discussion and trust building, in order to bridge existing
enclaves within the network, is critical if the full power of civil society is to be realized. Increasing size and diversity pose a challenge to these objectives – but not one that cannot be overcome.

This book argues that civil society organizations play an important role in global climate politics. I suggest that the lessons from Copenhagen concern relations within the movement as much as the strategies and tactics that it might employ. The “power in movement” comes from the strength of its internal networks. Investigating these networks should be a central enterprise for those who seek to understand why they succeed or fail – and investing in these networks should be a central goal for activists seeking to influence climate policy in the years to come.