**Corporate Campaigns Breakout - Notes**

1. **What fights are people currently involved in (think about: how do/might they tie to democracy fights)?**

**Rachel Curley (Public Citizen)**
Corporate Reform Coalition - emphasis on disclosure. One focus is power of mutual funds, which represent the majority of shares at many corporations. Pressuring them to vote their shares in support of shareholder proposals.

Rapid response – Facebook is one example; ATT payments to Trump attorney Michael Cohen is another.

Making the case to businesses that disclosure is in their interest.

**Charlie Cray (Greenpeace)**“No Fossil Fuel Money” pledge (with various partners). Well over 1000 candidates have taken the pledge, including incoming members of Congress. Support for New Green Deal as part of the effort.

International work – Greenpeace is active in a number of countries with increasingly authoritarian regimes. Looking at organizations in U.S. to take on fight against bad corporate actors in Brazil (where local activists are under active threat).

Facebook/social media – Direct tie to democracy in the U.S. and internationally. FB abdicated its responsibility worldwide (Ukraine example). As a U.S.-based company, Facebook should be targeted by U.S. activists.

Dark money disclosure: California model to force any organization that spends more than half its money on politics to disclose its contributors

Taking on ALEC. Behind anti-protest laws. Shame some of its corporate contributors (picking targets to maximize effectiveness – e.g., consumer companies).

**Amanda Robert (Sierra Club, Michigan)**
Dark money a huge issue in Michigan. Enbridge (Canadian company) a target because of its proposed pipeline through straits of Mackinac.

Devos and Koch money a big factor.

**Nayyirah Shariff (Flint Rising**)
Michigan has its own ALEC – the Mackinac Center, a free-market think tank focused on policy – many Michigan-based companies provide funding.

Water privatization, Nestles. Example of democracy tie-in: despite overwhelming opposition at an (intentionally hard-to-get-to) public hearing, plans for increased pumping capacity at bottling were approved by the state. (Note that the state regulatory official comes from BP.)

Complicated ties between municipal bond finance, water authority (looking to export water), industrial users (e.g., DTE utility), and Wall Street. Role for research to figure out the connections, points of leverage

Lack of transparency – Michigan excludes executive from FOIA.

PFAS (a class of chemical) contamination a big issue, various major corporations (3M, autos) implicated

**Porter McConnell (AFR)**AFR is more focused on regulations than corporate campaigns – but can put its “egghead” resources at the democracy movement’s disposal.

Example of ToysRUs campaign as something that shows how campaigns can catch the imagination of the public/elected: 3000 workers lost their jobs in a largely unnecessary bankruptcy brought on by LBO. Workers organized, got a small victory (tiny severance payments). That fight developed a great group of worker-leaders and highlighted private equity abuses in a way that shifted political dialog – presidential candidates are now all looking for ways to show they’re tough on private equity.

Money in politics/private equity connection. Blackstone was a major contributor to effort to defeat Calif rent control initative. Minimum ask: disclosure of political spending (would highlight for investors how their money is being used). Wells Fargo a target by many groups – poster child for bad corporate behavior (AFR maintains a Wells Fargo tracker). Probably uninfluenceable.

**Nafisah Ula (Jobs with Justice)**
 General focus on corporate greed, solidarity work with unions. “Expanded bargaining” model – goal is to expand the places where we have a say, e.g. , tenants associations as well as unions, holding police accountable to community.

Corporate campaigns are a way to enforce our wins – lacking enforcement, we lose what we’ve won.

Amazon as a particular corporate target. Working with Rise Up Retail, others. Framing: Amazon as public good/utility.

Tech tax – compensate communities for displacement.

In general: looking to “Expand the politics of the possible.”

Leverage isn’t just in brand/goodwill – we also have power as consumers, workers.

**Shayda Naficy, Corporate Accountability**
Focus on emblematic companies. Examples: Nestle and Coca Cola.

Taking on ALEC, fossil fuel corporations.

(Amanda add: car companies lobbying against fuel standards.)

Messaging – corporate power, corporate capture

Thinking more about privatization and financialization.

Questioning and delegimitizing corporate interference with our democracy

Holding corporations liable for damage.

1. **Very quick around-the-room to gather thoughts on areas of convergence and/or particular urgency (need to figure out time/space for follow-up conversations)**
* Finance and tech/social media (because they’re cross-cutting sectors; social media also weaken democracy directly and are the fastest-growing users of energy.
* Enforcement of policy – need for penalties, liability
* Create narrative challenging the role of corporations – use to build solidarity
* Gather graphics/stories about corporate influence and abuse in our communities
* Research to support work on the ground
* Public education around high-impact sectors – water, transportation
* Fossil Fuels/extractive industries generally

(Note from Porter – an AFR colleague has put together a curriculum that covers financialization, privatization, economic and social justice – publicly available, can be used in whole or part as needed)