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Hector Cordero-Guzmán, Nina Martin, Victoria Quiroz-Becerra and Nik Theodore
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Voting With Their Feet

Nonprofit Organizations and Immigrant Mobilization

Hector Cordero-Guzmán

City University of New York

Nina Martin

University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Victoria Quiroz-Becerra

The New School, NY

Nik Theodore

University of Illinois at Chicago

In 2006 immigrants and their supporters participated in a series of marches in cities throughout the United States. The enormous size and scale of the demonstrations were surprising to some observers, who saw the marches as a spontaneous outburst of frustration. This article argues the unprecedented turnout at the demonstrations should be seen not as a spontaneous outburst but in large part the result of long-standing cooperative efforts and networks of immigrant-serving nonprofit organizations. Immigrant-serving organizations were at the forefront of organizing public education campaigns, advocacy activities, and community mobilization efforts leading up to the demonstrations. Using Chicago and New York City as case studies, the article analyzes data from a survey of 498 nonprofit organizations conducted in 2005, just prior to the demonstrations. The authors show how a history of collaborations, organizational network ties, and the existing relations between organizations in key coalitions became the foundation for the mobilizations.

Keywords: *immigration; mobilizations; community-based organizations; New York; Chicago*

Introduction: The Rise of Immigrant Advocacy and Activism

Immigrants and their supporters took to the streets in Chicago, New York, and more than 100 other cities on May 1, 2006, to urge Congress to defeat legislation that would

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stiffen criminal penalties against undocumented immigrants and create new restrictions on immigrants seeking U.S. citizenship. Dubbed “A Day Without Immigrants,” these demonstrations were the largest mass mobilizations in the United States since the Vietnam War (Gorman, Miller, & Landsberg, 2006) and were intended to underscore the significant contributions immigrants make to the U.S. economy. Benita Olmedo was just one of the hundreds of thousands of immigrants who left their jobs to take part in the demonstrations. When asked by a journalist why she had taken her 11-year-old daughter and 7-year-old son out of school to join her in the demonstration, Ms. Olmedo, who entered the United States in 1986 and currently works as a nanny, responded: “I want my children to know their mother is not a criminal. I want them to be as strong as I am. This shows our strength” (Flaccus, 2006).

The political nature of the demonstrations was clearly on display as immigrants, labor unions, churches, elected officials, media personalities, and community-based organizations joined forces to protest against recent anti-immigrant measures, particularly the Border Protection, Anti-Terrorism, and Illegal Immigration Control Act of 2005 (HR 4437, also known as the Sensenbrenner Bill), which was passed by the U.S. House of Representatives in December 2005 and was being considered by the Senate. HR 4437 included numerous anti-immigrant provisions, such as making it a felony offense to enter the United States without proper documentation and imposing criminal penalties on anyone providing undocumented immigrants with assistance, including social services, health care, and housing and employment assistance (Confessore, Fisher, & Holl, 2006; Cordero-Guzmán & Quiroz-Becerra, 2007). Catalyzed by HR 4437, the marches quickly became a platform for voicing a broader set of concerns, such as the need for national immigration reform, renewed efforts in support of economic and social justice for immigrants, and the desire to build a more open and inclusive society. The demonstrators demanded recognition of their human rights, the right to live and work in the United States without fear of reprisals, the reunification of immigrant families, and the creation of a path to citizenship for undocumented immigrants (Hoyt, 2006). The unprecedented scale of the demonstrations surprised many observers, who saw the marches and rallies as a spontaneous outburst of frustration and anger over punitive immigration policies. Large Washington, D.C.–based national organizations, such as National Council of la Raza (NCLR), were caught off-guard by the grassroots demonstrations as their policy director Cecilia Munoz revealed to the *Washington Post* in a front page story: “I’m not sure anybody totally understands this phenomenon. . . . But we are happily stunned” (Aizenman, 2006).

In this article we argue that the 2006 mobilizations for immigrant rights should be seen not as a spontaneous outburst but instead as an outgrowth of long-standing cooperative efforts and well-established institutional networks of immigrant-serving community-based organizations, social service providers, and advocacy groups. These organizations were able to draw on preexisting organizational networks and relationships to fashion a forceful, public response to HR 4437, which was seen as

a direct assault on their mission, their capacity to provide needed services, and the well-being of their key constituencies. In response to long-simmering discontent with the direction of U.S. immigration policy, immigrant-serving organizations and grassroots coalitions have been at the forefront of crafting and implementing public education campaigns, advocacy initiatives, and community mobilization efforts, all of which provided movement resources that were drawn upon by the organizers of the demonstrations.

Using Chicago and New York City as case studies, this article examines the role of immigrant-serving nonprofit organizations in advocating for pro-immigrant policies. The data for our article primarily come from a survey of immigrant-serving nonprofit organizations conducted in 2005, just prior to the demonstrations. Drawing on a rich set of interviews, we show how preexisting interorganizational collaborations and networks served as movement resources for the demonstrations and why they should be regarded as a central part of the organizing infrastructure upon which the mobilizations were built. The next section of the article considers the political context within which the demonstrations occurred. This is followed by a brief review of the literature on social movements, organizations, political participation, and immigration to help us analyze the role of nonprofit organizations in the demonstrations. After a presentation of our survey methodology, we move to a discussion of how the social service delivery, organizing, and advocacy systems of immigrant-serving organizations are constituted in Chicago and New York City. We then proceed to a discussion of the networks between the organizations, their experience in advocacy activities, and the various network forms that are in place. We conclude by arguing that immigrant-serving organizations and the advocacy networks to which they belong have played a central role in the mobilizations.

Marching for Immigrant Rights

The wave of mobilizations that spread across the United States in 2006 began with a small rally outside the district office of House Speaker Dennis Hastert (Norgaard, 2006) where members of the Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights (ICIRR) placed crosses symbolizing the mounting deaths of persons trying to cross the U.S.–Mexico border. This was followed by the first mass mobilization on March 10, 2006, when more than 100,000 people rallied in downtown Chicago (Newbart, Thomas, Main, Herrmann, & Sweet, 2006). Demonstration organizers moved quickly to harness the dissatisfaction of immigrants and their supporters over the passage of HR 4437, and they called upon immigrants, community organizations, religious congregations, labor unions, and other supporters to turn out in large numbers to protest the bill. The March 10 demonstrations in Chicago were an early sign of what would become a national wave of protest, compared by some to the historic marches of the civil rights movement in the 1960s (Avila & Olivo,

2006). A second large mobilization followed on May 1 where, according to official estimates, approximately 400,000 marchers paraded through downtown Chicago before assembling in Grant Park (march organizers dispute the estimate, claiming that closer to 700,000 people participated) (Konkol, Sweeney, Guerrero, & Herman, 2006) and businesses throughout the city were shuttered when their workforces walked off the job (Ahmed-Ullah, 2006; Manor & Franklin, 2006). The protest cycle continued in July 19 when a smaller demonstration with about 10,000 people was held to demand a moratorium on workplace raids by U.S. immigration enforcement authorities (Olivo, Avila, & Casillas, 2006).

Between April and July of 2006, additional demonstrations were held in New York City and in more than 100 other localities across the country (Cano, 2006). On April 1, thousands of New Yorkers crossed the Brooklyn Bridge toward lower Manhattan to demand the fair treatment of immigrants. Then, 9 days later, an estimated 125,000 predominantly Latino protesters demonstrated in front of City Hall (Ferguson, 2006). On May 1, New Yorkers joined the nationwide mobilization. At noon, in solidarity with immigrants of various nationalities, the New York Immigration Coalition (NYIC) joined with other organizations to form human chains in neighborhoods throughout the city symbolizing the interconnectedness and unity of all human beings. That same afternoon, demonstrators gathered in Union Square for a pro-immigrant rights rally (Santos, 2006) with global Spanish language networks like *Telemundo-NBC* and *Univision* and other ethnic media outlets broadcasting their reports live from the scene to millions of viewers in the United States, Latin America, and other parts of the world. In neighborhoods like El Barrio (East Harlem), where Puerto Ricans and Mexicans concentrate, many businesses closed and high school attendance dropped significantly as workers and students packed the subways to join the demonstrations (O'Donnell, 2006).

The scale of the 2006 mobilizations is unprecedented. Jaime Contreras, president of the National Capital Immigration Coalition, accurately predicted that the marches would be “the largest demonstrations by immigrants ever held in this country” (Aizenman, 2006), while Flores-Gonzalez, Pallares, Herring, and Krysan (2006) noted that the “mobilizations were the first national level movements in U.S. history to be spearheaded by Latinos” (p. 1). At the forefront of the planning and organizing of these demonstrations was a dense network of community-based organizations, social service providers, hometown associations, churches, labor unions, community leaders, media personalities, and elected officials, and the unprecedented turnout at the marches is the direct result of the existing networks and cooperative efforts of these actors. Immigrant-serving organizations were at the center of the organizing efforts, committing resources, turning out their base, distributing flyers, sending blast e-mails and faxes, holding organizing meetings, requesting permits, managing media inquiries, and otherwise providing direction and structure to the mobilizations.

In Chicago, an estimated 180 organizations participated in the March 10 rally (Fornek, 2006). Although the event was partly billed as a “Day Without Mexicans” to underscore the importance of Mexican labor to the U.S. and Chicago economies,

organizations representing immigrants from other nationalities—including Irish, Polish, Filipino, Chinese, and Korean—were key participants. Several days before the May 1 demonstration, José Arreola from Casa Michoacán, a Mexican federation of hometown associations based in Chicago, discussed his expectations for the event:

I really expect this [march to be] more diverse because there is already 50 different ethnic groups, different races coming and joining this big movement . . . 25 unions are coming to join to support. All the labor movement, the Chicago Labor Federation. . . . And also all the groups of faith, different religions Muslims, Catholics, Protestants . . . there's a big diversity. (Labor Beat, 2006)

This was by no means the first time that immigrant-serving organizations had worked across lines of nationality and ethnicity to highlight common concerns over immigrant rights. These organizations have been collaborating in Chicago on a range of advocacy issues including education, health care, welfare reform, social service provision, housing and community development, environmental racism, and workers' rights as members of ICIRR and the Coalition of African, Arab, Asian, European, and Latino Immigrants of Illinois (CAAELII), and most organizations participating in the marches were part of several other formal and informal (or more episodic) coalitions, federations, and networks of immigrant-serving organizations.

Likewise, in New York City, immigrant-serving organizations regularly work in partnership under the auspices of NYIC, the Hispanic Federation, the Asian American Federation, the Hispanic Committee for Children and Families, the Asian Committee for Children and Families, the Federation of Protestant Welfare Agencies, United Neighborhood Houses, Catholic Charities, UJA/Federation, and other networks. There are at least 38 coalitions in New York City focusing on issues related to ethnic/national origin constituencies, human rights, labor rights, health care issues, community development, crime prevention and security, access to the media, and collaborations between nonprofit organizations. In both cities, immigrant-serving organizations have regularly collaborated, building networks, launching advocacy campaigns, and framing immigrant rights issues for policy makers and the general public (see Cordero-Guzmán, 2004). The 2006 demonstrations can be seen as the solidification of these interorganizational networks, the culmination of grassroots organizing, and the rise of immigrant-serving organizations as central players in the political representation and enfranchisement of immigrants (see Bloemraad, 2006; Cordero-Guzmán, 2005; Theodore & Martin, 2007).

Immigrant Political Participation and Nonprofit Organizations: Theoretical Considerations

Understanding the nature of the 2006 demonstrations requires an optic that integrates the literatures on political participation, nonprofit organizations, social

movements, and immigration. Community organizations are an increasingly important locus of activity for the incorporation of immigrants into both electoral and non-electoral politics in the United States (see Bloemraad, 2006; Cordero-Guzmán, 2005; Minkoff, 2002; Ramakrishnan, 2005; Wong, 2006). Although much of the literature on immigrants' political activity concentrates on formal electoral politics, such as voting and involvement with established political parties (DeSipio, 2001; Gerstle & Mollenkopf, 2001), an emerging literature is illuminating the significance of nonelectoral politics in the everyday lives of immigrants (Das Gupta, 2006; DeSipio, 2006; Mayer, 2007; Ramakrishnan, 2005; Theodore & Martin, 2007; Wong, 2006). Particularly where undocumented immigrants are concerned, traditional avenues for participation in formal politics (e.g., voting) are closed. For this reason, political participation principally occurs in the realm of nonelectoral politics through activities such as attending demonstrations, participating in community meetings, and signing petitions. In addition to being political activities in their own right, involvement in nonelectoral politics can function as the initial steps toward formal modes of political participation, which often culminate with voting after obtaining U.S. citizenship (Bloemraad, 2006; DeSipio, 2001; Ramakrishnan, 2005).

Immigrant-serving organizations are uniquely positioned to aid in the political incorporation of their constituents by understanding and framing their concerns and articulating these concerns to the political establishment. Immigrant-serving organizations have the credibility and capacity to recognize the issues that matter most to immigrants and to propose policy and programmatic responses to better meet immigrants' needs (Cordero-Guzmán, 2005). The leaders of these organizations are often immigrants themselves or the children of immigrants, and they generally have first-hand experience with the issues facing immigrant communities (Wong, 2006). Owing to these assets, immigrant-serving organizations have become an important medium through which immigrants are able to find and direct their political voice. In the case of the 2006 demonstrations, immigrant-serving organizations played a key institutional role in framing the terms of protest, highlighting the challenges brought about by various immigration reform proposals, and mobilizing marchers to take to the streets in defense of immigrant rights.

The mere presence of an institutional "infrastructure" of immigrant-serving organizations and advocacy coalitions, of course, is not sufficient to explain why large numbers of marchers took to the streets in 2006 in support of immigrant rights. Rather, the catalyst for the demonstrations can be found in the widely held view among immigrants of various nationalities that the political climate in the United States affecting immigrants has dramatically worsened (Pew Hispanic Center, 2007; Suro & Escobar, 2006). The Pew Hispanic Center (2007) found that more than one half of Latinos now worry that they, a family member, or a friend might be deported from the United States; 75% disapprove of workplace raids by immigration authorities; and 79% disapprove of the local law enforcement authorities' involvement in identifying undocumented immigrants. Furthermore, 72% of foreign-born Latinos

report that the federal immigration debate has made life more difficult for Latinos in the United States, generally report a sharp rise in discrimination. These views on the conditions facing immigrants and Latinos of various nationalities have been profoundly shaped by the content and tenor of the national immigration reform debate, and the 2006 demonstrations can be seen as having been induced by the broadly held perception of policy threats against immigrants and the organizations that serve them (see Reese, 2005).

The triggering event that galvanized immigrants and their supporters was the passage of the Sensenbrenner bill by the U.S. House of Representatives (Jonas, 2006). Polling data by the Pew Hispanic Center suggest that a number of legislative and enforcement changes also unified immigrants of different nationalities in opposition to recently enacted punitive policies against immigrants (and particularly undocumented immigrants). Bernstein (2002) noted, "The interactions with the state, as well as with 'opposing movements'" (p. 93)—in this case anti-immigrant social movements that are seeking further restrictions on international migration to the United States as well as the criminalization of undocumented immigrants residing in the country—can push activists and movement participants to develop a shared identity in the face of a common policy threat. This shared identity may develop even in cases where, in the absence of the policy threat, movement participants ordinarily would downplay, if not overtly reject, the adopted/ascribed group identity (see also Jones-Correa & Leal, 1996). However, in the case of the 2006 immigration mobilizations, punitive immigration policies created the sense of a "linked fate" (Dawson, 1994) among immigrant groups, providing the unity that is a necessary precondition for collective action. It frequently has been observed that social movement actors and participants both tap and engage in the construction of group identity as a way to foster a sense of solidarity among movement participants and to give nascent movements meaning and purpose (see e.g., Bernstein, 2002; Escobar & Alvarez, 1992; Jenkins, 1983; Tarrow, 1998). The severity and broad sweep of the Sensenbrenner bill created conditions that allowed movement activists and immigrant-serving organizations to rally around a common policy threat (Reese, 2005) as well as a shared "immigrant identity," and this was the foundation of the broad-based coalition that mobilized large numbers of demonstrators in cities across the United States.

Where the nature of the policy threat created the conditions for mass mobilization, the timing of the threat (the passage of the Sensenbrenner bill) created the urgency. Still, the construction of group identity is a tenuous achievement. Rather than risk a breakdown of consensus, the immigrant-serving organizations that formed the foundation of the 2006 immigrant rights demonstrations framed the issues facing immigrants in broad, humanitarian terms. In an effort to unite otherwise disparate immigrant groups, movement organizers adopted themes based on discourses associated with a human rights frame (with slogans such as "No human being is illegal") as well as slogans borrowed and adapted from the U.S. civil rights movement ("We have a Dream, Too").

Immigrant-serving organizations are located in an interorganizational field that includes churches, hometown associations, membership organizations, clubs, informal groups, and a host of related civil society actors (Bada, Fox, & Selee, 2006). The 2006 mobilizations were embedded within this interorganizational field and therefore must be understood within this context. Collectively, immigrant-serving organizations and allied groups “serve[d] as the ‘organizational staging ground’” for the mobilizations (McAdam, McCarthy, & Zald, 1988, p. 715), providing legitimacy, leadership, and resources, and in this sense, they constitute the organizational infrastructure of the demonstrations. McAdam and Scott (2005) observed that “In many situations, the seedbed of collective action is to be found in preexisting social arrangements that provide social capital critical to the success of early mobilizing processes” (p. 7; see also Tilly, 1978; Tilly, Tilly, & Tilly, 1975). In the case of the 2006 mobilizations, immigrant-serving organizations were a key component of the social arrangements that enabled the intentions and activities of a few to catch on and be transformed into mass protest (see Gerhards & Rucht, 1992). Because of the timing of our data collection effort, just prior to the mobilizations, we can investigate how preexisting organizational networks and social arrangements, combined with the nature of the policy threat posed by HR 4437, served as the institutional foundation of the mobilizations and channeled the political expression of the rights of formally disenfranchised immigrants seeking their full incorporation into American society.

Methodology

Data for this article are drawn from a survey of immigrant-serving organizations conducted in Chicago and New York City. Nonprofit organizations were identified for participation in the study using the Internal Revenue Service’s (IRS) 2004 Business Master File. We selected a number of detailed social service, advocacy, and community development categories using the National Taxonomy of Exempt Entities (NTEE) and identified organizations that had an income of at least \$25,000 in 2004 and that filed IRS Form 990. We contacted every group within this universe of nonprofit organizations (at least six attempts were made to contact nonresponsive organizations). The research team screened the organizations by telephone to determine the share of clients who were born outside of the United States. If the organization reported that more than 30% of its clients/participants were foreign born, we scheduled an in-person interview with the executive director or a senior staff member. A survey lasting approximately 1 hour was completed with 133 organizations in Chicago (response rate of 77%) and 274 in New York City (response rate of 72%). The surveys were conducted between February and October of 2005. Questions focused on five central aspects of the organization: the history of the organization and the neighborhoods served; types of programs, services, and activities, particularly collaborations around policy issues; the characteristics of the clients,

staff, and populations served; transnational activities; and sources and levels of funding and related resources. A telephone interview lasting about 10 minutes was conducted with those organizations whose client base was between 15% and 29% foreign born. In Chicago, 49 such organizations were interviewed while in New York 42 organizations were interviewed. This shorter survey asked about populations served, programs and activities, and transnational activities. The survey was also undertaken by a partner research team in Los Angeles.

Working for Immigrant Rights

The increasing numbers and diversity of immigrants in Chicago and New York City are giving rise to a renewed mandate for nonprofit organizations to meet the needs and enhance the well-being of these populations. Immigrant-serving organizations help to articulate and represent community needs and concerns, garner political power at the local level, and help immigrants to maintain social, cultural, political, and economic ties with their communities of origin (Cordero-Guzmán, 2005). Sizable and diverse nonprofit sectors have developed in Chicago and New York City that encompass a wide variety of immigrant-serving organizations, from small community groups to national service organizations. These organizations provide services, engage in organizing, and participate in advocacy activities.

In the area of social service delivery, immigrant-serving organizations offer an array of programs that contribute to the social and economic incorporation of immigrants while at the same time helping to retain the customs, mores, and service delivery styles of countries and communities of origin. Social services cover a range of activities, including educational programs, health care, housing assistance, job training, and emergency services. Arts and cultural programming also are important to immigrant organizations as they provide people a space to express their cultural heritage and maintain connections with their countries of origin (Cordero-Guzmán, 2005).

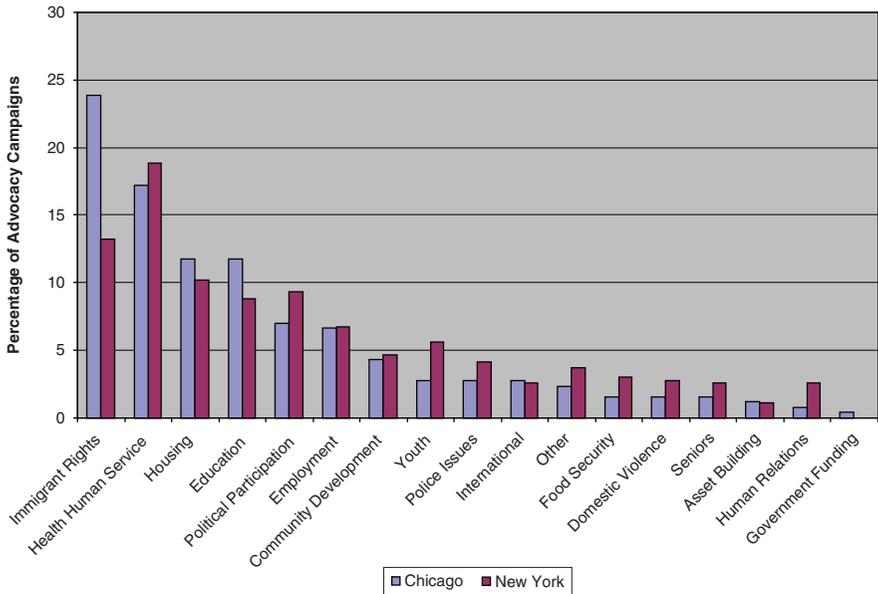
In the areas of advocacy and organizing, activities are directed toward creating spaces and conditions where new understandings of immigrants' lives and needs can emerge, what the social movement literature calls "framing processes" (Tarrow, 1998). A sizeable number of organizations in Chicago and New York City have worked on issues of political voice and participation, which were central concerns during the demonstrations, as illustrated by the slogan "Today we march, tomorrow we vote." Prior to the 2006 demonstrations, immigrant-serving organizations had been developing significant experience in advocating and organizing around a number of policy issues related to immigrant rights. Their advocacy campaigns illustrate how a framework for articulating and advocating for immigrant rights has been taking shape over time. Through advocacy and organizing, immigrant-serving organizations seek to address policy issues, gain or improve access to political institutions, and develop new discourses for understanding conditions faced by

immigrants. Although an analysis of the discourses used in the various campaigns is beyond the scope of this article, it is worth noting that recent campaigns have been cast using the language of human rights, support for the expansion of political rights to immigrants, recognition of the contributions of immigrants to the economy, and the importance of keeping families united. These discourses resurfaced, traveled, and resonated through community networks, and they proved to be important framing discourses for the 2006 demonstrations for immigrant rights.

Organizations engage in advocacy when they make public claims to promote social change (Andrews & Edwards, 2004), and they organize when they mobilize people to advocate for a particular cause (Chetkovich & Kunreuther, 2006). Our surveys reveal that immigrant-serving organizations are actively involved in advocacy and organizing. Of the organizations we surveyed in both Chicago and New York City, 77% have been involved in advocacy campaigns since 2000. Through these efforts, immigrant-serving organizations have helped articulate the needs of immigrant constituencies, gained an understanding of the challenges these constituencies face, and developed the organizational and advocacy skills of their constituents. As part of our attempt to identify the types of advocacy activities in which immigrant-serving organizations in Chicago and New York City are regularly engaged, we asked organizations to identify the campaigns they have worked on since 2000 on (Figure 1). In Chicago, the most cited policy issue was immigrant rights (24%), followed by health and human services (17%), housing (12%), education (12%), and political participation (7%). In New York City, health and human services was the most common advocacy issue mentioned (19%). This was followed immigrant rights (13%), housing (10%), political participation (9%), and education (9%). Our data indicate that close to 54% of groups in Chicago and New York City were involved in at least one advocacy campaign, 43% and 37%, respectively, were involved in two campaigns, and close to 25% were involved in three or more campaigns.

Advocacy and organizing activities also are directed toward gaining or increasing access to political institutions. Over the past decade, immigrant-serving organizations have engaged in campaigns related to access to drivers' licenses by immigrants, immigration policy reform, the Dream Act, the AgJobs bill, and the Real ID Act, as well as campaigns for permanent residency, prevention of deportation, immigration fraud, and immigrant worker rights. In Chicago, a coalition of workers' rights organizations including the San Lucas Worker Center, Latino Union, and the Chicago Workers' Collaborative launched an advocacy campaign to strengthen the Illinois Day Labor Services Act. Day labor temporary staffing agencies are a major employer in port-of-entry immigrant neighborhoods, and these agencies have been associated with rampant workplace violations (Peck & Theodore, 2001). Through organizing, direct action, and public education campaigns, this network of workers' rights organizations successfully sought to strengthen state law to regulate the activities of day labor agencies, restrict the fees charged to workers, and increase penalties against abusive employers. Likewise in New York City, Centro Hispano

Figure 1
Policy and Advocacy Issues Addressed by Migrant Organizations



Cuzcatán, a member of the Queens Drivers’ License Coalition representing Latino, South Asian, and East Asian immigrants, organized a march in early 2005 to demand access to drivers’ licenses without having to produce a Social Security number. Approximately 350 migrants from various countries and more than 40 organizations and elected officials supported the march. Asociación Tepeyac, an organization that serves Latino communities in New York City and is a member of the nationwide Coalition for Permanent Residency, also has engaged in several campaigns to promote immigrant rights. These include the Permanent Residency National Campaign and the Campaign for the Undocumented, which pressured the business sector to reject proposals to build a wall along the U.S.–Mexico border and to stiffen criminal penalties against undocumented immigrants.

Political participation campaigns, focusing mainly on voter education and registration, are another means of increasing immigrants’ access to political and civic institutions. The Hispanic Federation organizes voter registration drives and collaborates with its member organizations and schools to educate the Latino electorate. It also urges its constituents to become involved in civic activities by encouraging organizations to become voter registration sites, hosting voter registration days, and

inviting Hispanic Federation fieldworkers to organizational events to register new voters. In 2004, the New York Coalition to Expand Voting Rights was created to promote a change in the City Charter to restore noncitizen voting. The coalition has more than 60 member organizations and unions representing various local and national groups pushing to grant noncitizens the right to vote in local elections.

Organizations also target specific events such as elections or legislative cycles to advocate for increased access to these institutions. For the 2004 elections, NYIC organized Immigrant Votes Making the Difference that focused on “getting immigrant voters to pledge to cast an informed vote on Election Day 2004” (NYIC, 2004). Participating organizations provided voter education, canvassed immigrant neighborhoods, held phone drives, and leafleted on election day, among other activities. In Chicago, immigrant-serving organizations also have collaborated on issues of voter registration, particularly in the run up to the 2003 and 2007 municipal elections and the 2004 presidential election.

A Typology of Coalitions

Immigrant-serving organizations undertake numerous efforts to advocate for the political, policy, and programmatic interests of their constituents. Like many other types of nonprofit organizations, those representing immigrants often undertake policy work in collaboration with other organizations (Cordero-Guzmán, 2004, 2005; Craig, Taylor, & Parkes, 2004; Guo & Acar, 2005; Minkoff, 2002; Takahashi & Smutny, 2001). There are many reasons why organizations create collaborative relationships. In his study of collaborations among community-based organizations, Cordero-Guzmán (2004) found that there are internal organization-related as well as external or contextual reasons why organizations enter into networks and coalitions. Among the internal factors are to expand and enhance services, gain access to and share information, reduce costs, gain access to resources, and enhance reputation. External factors mainly center on government- and funder-driven collaborations. Organizations might enter a coalition to apply or qualify for funding or to divide the work when contracting with the government. Funders and governments might also encourage collaborations to diffuse risk, expand the client base, support organizational learning opportunities, and broaden the impact of programs. In addition, Pipes and Ebaugh (2002), in their description of religious-based coalitions, noted that among the purposes of coalitions are solidarity toward the local community, provision of services, and social action. Organizational coalitions are not only relevant because they facilitate service provision but also because they constitute building blocks for the development of ties among various groups. These networks function as bridges between immigrant communities and other parts of the service delivery system and can be a catalyst for action when particular services, programs, or initiatives are threatened as was the case with the 2006 immigrant mobilizations (see Reese, 2005).

Some organizations' advocacy work is complicated by their small staff size and limited organizational capacity. Other groups are reluctant to publicly challenge the

city or the state if a significant portion of their funding comes from government agencies (Marwell, 2004; Piven & Cloward, 1977). For these reasons, many immigrant-serving organizations belong to networks that take responsibility for policy analysis and advocacy work on issues relevant to immigrants. These networks are flexible and shape themselves into action according to the types of actors involved in the particular initiative, the level of institutionalization, the intensity of interaction among members of the network, the process of setting the policy goals and objectives of the network, the degree of centralization of the network, the nature and priority of the issues involved, and the type of leadership that catalyzes and coalesces around the campaigns.

Partnerships between immigrant-serving organizations also are a way for organizations to enhance their visibility, viability, and influence in local decision-making processes. A member-based coalition organization in New York City noted that,

Our [member organizations] are only strong and sustainable if they partner with other community-based organizations where they are located. We go for a very grassroots level of organizing. . . . We have gained trade organization status and so we actually have a seat at the negotiating table and that is as a direct result of our advocacy.

Our research suggests that a variety of actors are involved in the interorganizational networks of immigrant-serving groups. One of the ways we identified that organizations are part of a given network was to ask organizations to name their key partners in the various advocacy campaigns that they were involved in since 2000. The types of partners mentioned include immigrant-serving organizations working on similar issues, umbrella organizations and federations, advocacy coalitions, elected officials, government agencies, churches, schools, hospitals, and community members. We found that levels of involvement vary and that each campaign had its own organizational dynamic in that the relationships among members varied from one alliance to another. Our research suggests that there are three broad types of networks present among immigrant-serving organizations in Chicago and New York City and that these differ according to the degree of centralization of the decision-making process. Some have adopted a structure that gives equal participation to all the member organizations (*coalition organization*), while others concentrate power in an umbrella organization (*federated model/umbrella organization*), and still others rotate leadership with network organizations assuming leadership roles at particular points during a campaign (*highly networked lead organization*).

The Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights is the largest coalition of immigrant-serving organizations in the Chicago region and is an example of how a coalition organization operates. ICIRR was founded in 1980 to coordinate the efforts of several organizations that provided services to immigrants. The mission and activities of the organization have evolved, and ICIRR has become one of the leading advocates for immigrants and for the organizations that represent them. ICIRR is a membership

organization with more than 80 groups, including community organizations, unions, educational institutions, and religious groups. Individuals from member organizations constitute ICIRR's board. Members help to set the agenda of the organization, including its advocacy priorities and educational activities. ICIRR is involved in several large-scale campaigns, one of which is the New Americans Initiative. This is a state-funded program designed to help permanent residents of Illinois become U.S. citizens. ICIRR administers the program with more than \$3 million in state funding, and member organizations that receive funding provide a variety of services to assist immigrants in the citizenship process. This involves workshops, citizenship classes, English classes, assistance in preparing the necessary documents to file the application, and referrals for legal assistance. The New Americans Initiative has 20,000 people in the pipeline to become citizens. Through this program, ICIRR involved many of its member organizations in building the immigrant electoral base hoping to increase the political power of immigrants.

The New York Immigration Coalition is another example of a coalition organization. NYIC was founded in 1987 in response to service needs arising from the legalization provisions of the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986. NYIC has more than 150 member organizations that nominate members for its board of directors. NYIC's main areas of work include policy analysis and advocacy on immigration-related issues, civic participation and voter education, community education, and leadership development.

The federated model/umbrella organization connects multiple organizations that have a common approach, area of service, or client base. In New York City, the Hispanic Federation is an example of a specialized and professionalized umbrella organization. This type of federated/umbrella organization is also membership based, but decision making is fairly centralized and focused mainly in issues related to the provision of services. The Hispanic Federation, founded in 1990 "to strengthen, support, and develop institutions that advance the quality of life of Latino New Yorkers," has a membership of close to 90 Latino health and human service organizations. In addition to offering technical assistance and grants, the Federation collaborates with its member organizations to implement programs on health insurance, emergency assistance, voter registration, immigration assistance, HIV/AIDS, disaster assistance, and technology. The Federation has its own staff and board and a degree of independence from its members regarding agenda setting and decision making.

The third type of network involves a highly networked lead organization that, given its history of activism, has become a key nodal organization that plays an active role in building organizational networks. In Chicago, Centro Sin Fronteras is a lead organization, particularly among Latinos because it focuses its activities in Chicago's heavily Latino neighborhoods of Pilsen, Humboldt Park, Hermosa, and Belmont-Craigin. Most of the people served by the organization are originally from Mexico and Central America or are the children of immigrants. The organization

was founded in 1987 after the murder of Rudy Lozano, a prominent immigrant activist, union organizer, and supporter of the late Chicago Mayor Harold Washington. Following in his legacy, the mission of the organization is to promote social and economic justice by organizing immigrants around issues that affect their quality of life. Its main activities include immigrant family reunification, citizenship classes, English as a Second Language classes, leadership training, and health initiatives. Centro Sin Fronteras has partnered with other organizations to register immigrants to vote, and it has been involved in numerous immigrant rights campaigns, including pushing for state drivers' licenses for undocumented immigrants. Its main partners in this effort were ICIRR, Puerto Rican Cultural Center, Latino Organization of the Southwest, and Casa Aztlan (the bill fell one vote short of passing). Despite this setback, Centro Sin Fronteras has continued to solidify its relationships with its partners, working with other organizations in the 2006 mobilizations and subsequently. Centro Sin Fronteras, true to its name, is also involved in transnational campaigns to improve life in Latin America. It works with consulates in Chicago and abroad around issues of health care, political freedoms, and development of the arts.

In the face of policy threats, coalitions of immigrant-serving organizations have emerged as leaders in crafting forceful responses to defend the interests of member organizations and their constituents. Coalitions perform three distinct roles as policy intermediaries. First, they strengthen alliances between immigrant-serving organizations. Second, they are a bridge between these organizations and the state. Coalitions of immigrant-serving organizations interpret state policy, communicate the impacts of policy change, identify policy threats, and present a united front to advocate for policies to advance their constituents' interests. Finally, these coalitions provide a medium for social service organizations to become involved in policy advocacy, without those organizations risking contractual relationships with government agencies or violating their nonprofit status.

In addition to their role as policy intermediaries, coalitions may become involved in direct mobilization. In the case of the 2006 demonstrations for immigrant rights, coalitions and their members in Chicago and New York City handled much of the planning and logistics that made the mobilization possible (Fornek, 2006). This planning took locally specific forms. Chung-Wah Hong, executive director of NYCIC, noted that "in New York, given our diversity, people are doing different things to express themselves" (Solomont, 2006); therefore, march organizers devised a range of mobilization activities, including forming human chains throughout the city and boycotting businesses. According to Joshua Hoyt (2006), executive director of ICIRR, "The Chicago march was the work of emerging Mexican immigrant leaders and lifelong Mexican-American activists." These activists worked across lines of neighborhood and nationality to conceptualize a response to the policy threat posed by the Sensenbrenner bill (Fornek, 2006) and to build solidarity across immigrant communities. As Sadiya Ahmed of the Council on American-Islamic Relations

wrote in an action alert that was e-mailed by the organization, the demonstrations provided an opportunity for immigrants and their supporters to “Stand in solidarity with people of all races and nationalities because immigration legislation does not just affect one group; it affects everyone!” (Associated Press, 2006). One of the achievements of the coalitions of immigrant-serving organizations that were involved in the 2006 demonstrations was the ability to narrate the significance of the demonstrations for policy makers and the general public and to use the mobilizations as a platform for advocating policy changes that support immigrants and recognize the economic and social contributions they make to American society.

Conclusion: Immigrant-Serving Organizations and Mass Mobilization

The immigrant rights demonstrations of 2006 were catalyzed by an accumulated sense of frustration over the direction of U.S. immigration policy. Issues such as family reunification, the criminalization of undocumented immigrants, and the rise of a new nativism among segments of the U.S. population convinced march organizers that the time had come for immigrants to take to the streets to demand better treatment (see Narro, Wong, & Shaddock-Hernández, 2007; Pulido, 2007). Although these issues were the motivation for the demonstrations, networks among immigrant-serving nonprofit organizations provided critical leadership and resources that were necessary for mobilizing immigrants on an unprecedented scale. In both Chicago and New York City, immigrant-serving organizations have worked successfully in collaboration with each other on various policy issues. Victories in the political realm have strengthened partnerships between immigrant-serving organizations, and this sense of effectiveness has created a desire to participate in future political activities (see Cordero-Guzmán, 2004; Garcia Bedolla, 2005).

Our research suggests that the structures and processes of immigrant mobilization were similar in Chicago and New York City. In both cities, immigrant-serving organizations, as well as various formal and informal coalitions to which they belong, galvanized the hopes and fears of immigrants, transforming aspirations for a better life into a forceful demand for political rights. Building on earlier service, organizing, and advocacy efforts, these organizations had the capacity and credibility to successfully frame the challenges facing immigrants and to mobilize their constituencies. Through the activities of nonprofit organizations, many immigrants learn about policies that may affect their well-being as well as what they can do individually and collectively to participate in civic and political activities. Furthermore, coalitions of nonprofit organizations have amplified immigrants' political voice and allowed them to collectively and powerfully express their demands in the time-honored tradition of civic engagement, street-level political activism, and peaceful

protest. Within days of the marches, organizers in both cities began work to transform the energy of the protests into an enduring political base that can translate into electoral power. They began designing voter registration and citizenship drives as well as plans for voting drives that coincide with national and local elections (Avila & Olivo, 2006; Swarns, 2006). Looking to the future, Margarita Klein of UNITE-HERE noted that the alliance that formed around the Chicago demonstrations “is not a coalition for one event, it is a coalition for a struggle” (Labor Beat, 2006), and like the coalitions that formed in other cities, it might become an important part of the political landscape in the United States for years to come. According to Joshua Hoyt of ICIRR, “You’re seeing the beginning of a Latino civil rights movement in this nation” (Avila & Olivo, 2006).

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Héctor R. Cordero-Guzmán is a Professor in the Ph.D. Programs in Sociology and Urban Education at the City University of New York (CUNY) Graduate Center and a Professor and Chair of the Black and Hispanic Studies Department at Baruch College of the City University of New York. Dr. Cordero-Guzmán received his M.A. and Ph.D. degrees from The University of Chicago and is currently working as a Program Officer in the Economic Development Unit of the Asset Building and Community Development Program at the Ford Foundation.

Nina Martin is an assistant professor of geography at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Her research interests include immigration, the informal economy, and the role of nonprofit organizations in responding to changing urban labor markets.

Victoria Quiroz-Becerra is a doctoral candidate in the Department of Political Science at the New School for Social Research. Her research interests are at the intersection of political science and anthropology and include issues of citizenship, women's political participation, and migrant transnational collective action. Currently, she is project director of the New York Immigrant Organizations Project.

Nik Theodore is associate professor in urban planning and policy at the University of Illinois at Chicago and director of the Center for Urban Economic Development. His recent research has focused on employment policy, community development, and the dynamics of low-wage labor markets.