Original Article

The 2006–2007 immigration mobilizations and community capacity: The experience of Chicago

John J. Betancur[a] **with Maricela Garcia**[b]
[a]University of Illinois at Chicago, Illinois.

[b]National Council of La Raza, Illinois.

Abstract This article examines the 2006–2007 phase of the immigration movement in Chicago with a particular focus on the capacity of Latinos to advance initiatives of this magnitude. It studies the factors and forces involved and the ways in which they combined in opposition to federal immigration bill HR 4437. The experience points to a multifaceted movement initially carried out by community-based organizations but ultimately advanced by direct community action. Analysis reveals tremendous advances in the community's ability to pursue such initiatives, especially through the combination of mass action and organizational work. It also suggests that community capacity as manifested in the movement cannot be contained in fixed variables: much is acquired *sobre la marcha*, each moment requires different combinations and actions, and the ability to advance often depends on forces beyond the community's control.
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Introduction

This article reports our research findings on the 2006–2007 mobilizations in Chicago against HR 4437, a federal immigration bill approved by the US House

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of Representatives in 2005. The study sought to examine the capacity of the Latino community to address challenges of this magnitude and to advance alternative legislation. Although the study focused on Chicago, a city that played a central role in this phase of the immigration movement, the inquiry includes aspects beyond Chicago, especially the role of Latino national groups (also referred to as Latino grasstops). Research draws on the experiences and insights of movement leaders that were not only at the core of the mobilizations but also have been involved in the movement nationally and locally for years. The authors gathered other data to verify the accuracy of interviewees' accounts and to advance other insights, and included their own experience – one of them as a movement leader and the other as an observer and participant in many of the events under discussion. The research design and analysis gained from literatures on community capacity and social movement. We begin with an overview of the literature informing the inquiry, and continue with background highlighting critical events and results; next, we examine evidence and tensions that speak to the research question, and conclude with general considerations on both the movement and the theories. This article does not intend to test a particular hypothesis or literature but to add to the record of the immigration movement in this critical phase, offering along the way insights on the guiding theories and the experiences learned.

Framing the Discussion of the 2006–2007 Mobilizations and What They Revealed About Community Capacity

The study of community capacity is relatively new and has focused on elements contributing to the development of strong organizations. A 1995 Symposium convened by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (Goodman *et al*, 1998, 259) summarized it as "(1) the characteristics of communities that affect their ability to identify, mobilize, and address social and public health problems and (2) the cultivation and use of transferable knowledge, skills, systems, and resources that affect community – and individual – level changes consistent with public health-related goals and objectives." The Symposium identified components of capacity that the field has largely agreed to, namely participation, leadership, skills, networks, sense of community and history, community power and values and critical reflection (see Kretzman and McKnight, 1993; Glickman and Servon, 1998; Gittel and Wilder, 1999; Nye and Glickman, 2000; Hunt, 2007; Sites *et al*, 2007; Lempa *et al*, 2008). Chaskin (2001, 395) added that community capacity came from the "interaction of human capital, organizational resources, and social capital existing within a given community that can be leveraged to solve collective problems and improve or maintain the well-being of a given community," and The Institute of Medicine emphasized the protective role of capacity on communities (Gebbie *et al*, 2003).

Unfortunately, this literature often neglects highly interactive and often unpredictable factors such as context, structure or circumstances beyond organizations' control, thus reducing community capacity to that of its organizations – within a framework of dirigisme (Banks and Shenton, 2001; Craig, 2007) and unquestioned assumptions on how much organizations can actually achieve by themselves. As important as organizations are, we sought to explore the larger picture of Latino community capacity as reflected in the 2006–2007 phase of the immigration movement – possibly reaching the same conclusions as this literature, but definitely seeking other possible factors and dynamics. Actually, we were most interested in identifying factors or combinations that explained the community's ability to address threats such as House Bill 4437 and to advance pro-immigrant legislation. As we focused then on the convergence of movement and community capacity, each of the three main movement explanations today, resource mobilization theory (RMT), poor people's movements theory (PPMT) and new movement theory (NMT) offered perspectives and elements worth examining.

RMT seems most relevant as it attributes movement success or failure to the ability of social movement organizations (SMOs) in resource mobilization. Criticizing theories of structural dislocation (Durkheim), class struggle (Marx) and social grievances (for example, Gusfield, 1968; Smelser, 1963) for failing to show why at times their presumed causal factors led to movements and at others did not, RMT explains the move from grievance to action as a function of ability to amass and control resources on the part of rational actors seeking to advance their interests. For RMT, resources may be more important than grievances as the social movement industry can actually manufacture the latter. Moreover, RMT proponents argue that movements are *intentional* – rather than spontaneous – entrepreneurial undertakings seeking to change "elements of social structure" (McCarthy and Zald, 1977, 1218), redistribution or representation for the excluded (Jenkins and Perrow, 1977; Tilly, 1979). They are led by SMOs, staffed by professionals and developing movement on the basis of resources, and purposeful action (Jenkins, 1983). RMT seeks to establish *when* and *how* movements form and evolve and *why* they succeed or fail by studying resource mobilization, SMOs, societal support, coalitions, dynamics of growth, decline and change, forces involved, interactions, roles and government tactics to support or absorb them.

While valuing this approach and using it to explore capacity, our experience and the history of the movement suggest aspects that do not seem to fit this rational actor process (for example, disruption, resistance, xenophobia and unexpected events such as the terrorist attack of September 11, 2001). Indeed, as in community capacity theory, the centrality of SMOs in manufacturing social movements gave most importance and centrality to organizations.

In contrast, PPMT insists on the importance of grievances, mass insurgency and resistance while criticizing RMT (Fox Piven and Cloward, 1997, 435–437)

as an effort to replace movements with half-way, bureaucratically engineered and paternalistic versions of social change, limiting the struggle for change to what is feasible within the status quo. Explaining that the poor do not act out of class consciousness but out of the daily experiences shaping their grievances, they claim that insurgency results from specific circumstances, that autonomy and confrontation have proven critical for challenging the status quo, that "breakdown is a precondition of collective protest and violence, of riot and rebellion" (Fox Piven and Cloward, 1997, 439) and that politics of disruption are the best and often only option for the poor.

> When lower-stratum groups form organizations and employ conventional political strategies, they can easily be ignored. But institutional disruptions cannot so easily be ignored. Institutional disruptions provoke conflict; they arouse an array of "third parties," including important economic interests and may even contribute to electoral de-alignment. To restore institutional stability and to avoid worsening polarization, political leaders are forced to respond, whether with concessions or with repression
> (Fox Piven and Cloward, 1997, 451–452).

Given the level of emotion HR 4437 unleashed and the role of mobilized mass resistance in defeating it, we added these PPMT indicators to our research design.

Lastly, NMT pays most attention to the *why* and the foci and actors of new movements. Developed in Europe and inspired by constructivism, it pointed to the challenges and frustrations of socioeconomic crises and restructuring in the 1960s and 1970s and the responses of people seeking deeper democratization, self-determination, differentiation and identity beyond the work place. For NMT, new movements draw on constituencies bonded and mobilized by ideologies and on emerging new political styles emphasizing culture, meaning and difference – rather than class (Habermas, 1981; Offe, 1985). Offe (1985) explains new movements as responses to a new sense of deprivation that caused people to turn to sources of inspiration and strength other than the work place (for example, citizenship, quality of life and culture). For Touraine (1985), most conflicts of post-industrial societies are associated with the production of "symbolic goods" or the appropriation of "historicity."

Although contending with the others or presented as alternatives, each of these theories offers angles that can complement each other. Referring to PPMT, Kling (2003) recognizes the importance of rebellion, disobedience, mobilization and demand but suggests that organizations and resources are critical when the opportunity to intervene arises. Schram (2003, 716) argued that PPMT was a "praxis specific to the poor" rather than a "universalistic theory of social movements." Referring to the debates between NMT and RMT, Melluci (1980 and 1981) claimed that the former focused on the "why" of movements and the

latter on the "how" and Canel (1991) argued that RMT dealt with micro-processes and NMT with macro-processes. These comments hint at the possibility that different theories may in fact fit different times, circumstances, grievances or social groups even within the same movement. By emphasizing rational theory and placing resources and SMOs at the core, RMT corresponds best to Alinsky or community development organization approaches of redress dominant in the United States. Then, by focusing on the dynamics of social change requiring or resorting to institutional disruption or insurgency, PPMT includes aspects that RMT or NMT miss. Rather than subscribing to any one of them, we embrace the possibility of more nuanced movements including different combinations of these factors; at the same time, we use their contributions to guide our research.

To complete the picture, we sought literature on the 2006–2007 mobilizations. Aside from media accounts, blogs and other internet sources often polarized along racial lines, or from depictions of the mobilizations as spontaneous outbursts of frustration, we found only a few pieces specific to the Chicago mobilizations. An article by Cordero-Guzmán *et al* (2008, 598) argued that mobilizations were "in large part the result of long-standing co-operative efforts and networks of immigrant-serving nonprofit organizations." A second one by Theodore and Martin (2007, 284) noted that immigrant "organizations have emerged as leaders in framing policy options and advocating for state intervention in markets." Then, in a book on the Chicago mobilizations, Flores-González and Gutiérrez (2010, 8) attributed success "to years of organizing for immigrant rights paired with strong opposition to a draconian law that affected directly or indirectly most Latinos in this country." Corroborating the role of this long-term building process, Pallares (2010) depicted the mobilizations as part of a broader social movement and characterized them as decentralized, lacking a central leadership, multi-organizational, including of many voices, multi-tactical, heterogeneous, grassroots, contentious and multi-issue.

On these bases, we opted for an open-ended exploration of the mobilizations and movement focusing on what they could reveal about the capacity of the Latino community and its organizations to pursue efforts of this magnitude. As part of this, we looked for those factors of the 2006–2007 mobilizations that caused or contributed to the defeat of HR 4437 as well as for those negatively affecting the movement. We asked how much these factors spoke to community capacity and the extent to which explanations such as RMT allowed for the proper assessment of success or failure while serving as blueprints for further action. To start, we defined capacity as the ability of the community through its organizations, people and other factors to respond to challenges such as HR 4437 and to advance community agendas. Although we examine a particular phase of the immigrant movement, the experience was so unique and significant that we trusted it could shed light on these matters. We focus on the experience

and the results, but at the same time profit from the literature to guide research and analysis; we also rely on participant observation, the experience of leaders and data to learn from this experience.

Sources

The article benefitted from the vast community experience of the authors and their involvement in the movement and mobilizations. While incorporating their experiences, it drew primarily on 16 lengthy interviews of members of the mobilizations' lead group as well as on insights gained through informal conversations with community participants. Interviewees included staff or directors from organizations and individuals. Interviews took the form of oral histories. Each respondent gave an account of her/his community trajectory, the immigration movement and mobilizations and contextual and other factors they considered important to determine community capacity as reflected in the mobilizations and generally. The authors also attended formal and informal discussions of the movement, sat in panels with other researchers and activists and conducted archival research of media and printed accounts and analyses of events. Although some interviewees indicated that we could quote them by name, others did not. Hence, we chose to identify everybody by position. Information and insights were triangulated as much as possible to make sure they did not constitute isolated or unsupported statements.

The Immigration Movement and Mobilizations

Although Latinos were instrumental in the passing of the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 (IRCA), the Act actually helped bring the community and its organizations together around a multifaceted effort of (1) legalization of unauthorized immigrants covered by the Act; (2) assistance to the mass of new immigrants, both refugees from Central America and others being uprooted by a generalized socioeconomic crisis in the region; (3) struggle to reinforce the economic, social and political rights of all Latinos; and (4) pursuit of new, pro-immigrant and pro-refugee laws addressing issues the Act left out (for example, establishing a path for immigration of people without close relatives in the United States), addressing immigrant rights that the Act actually weakened and including categories of people the Act neglected. As an interviewee put it, "so long as there is an unauthorized problem [we add, a legislation denying equal opportunities and rights to immigrants] there will be an immigration movement to address it" (spokesperson). A growing anti-immigrant sentiment following the Act and promoted by organizations of the extreme Right actually energized the Latino immigration movement behind the double task of community defense and pursuit of reform.

Having gained control of Congress in 1996, an extreme Right Republican Congress enacted in that same year the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act (IIRIRA) that coined the categories of "illegal" and "unlawful" immigrants, barring them from reentering the country for set periods of time and initiating the criminalization of unauthorized workers – reinforced since by newer measures. The Act targeted the US-Mexico border for intensified patrol and construction of fences. This Congress also appended measures to laws such as the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act that further eroded immigrant rights and limited their access to services. Lengthening of waiting periods for citizenship or family reunification made authorized immigration very burdensome. But if the environment was harsh for authorized immigrants, it was harsher for unauthorized ones blamed for the economic and social ills of the country. These actions and the 1994 campaign and approval of California's Proposition 187, which created a screening system to prevent unauthorized entrants from accessing public services, unleashed the most vicious anti-immigrant period in US history. Militarization of the USA-Mexico border actually broke the cycle of seasonal workers: since crossing became dangerous and expensive, those who managed to do it and survive stayed in the United States, rather than going back to their homelands and families as had been the case traditionally.

Then, immediately following the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, anti-immigrant forces intensified their opposition, depicting unauthorized workers as law-breakers, social service predators, lowly races and potential terrorists. Bill after bill seeking to criminalize unauthorized immigration came in front of different legislative bodies throughout the country. As a result, pro-immigrant groups increasingly confronted a wall of xenophobia and nativism.

Latino organizations reacted to these attacks by intensifying their legal, educational and service assistance to immigrants in need, especially at the local level. Activists from across the country started contemplating concerted actions that would have national impact. They staged visits to Washington to meet legislators and, in 1996, marched on the country's capital. In February 2000, on the initiative of Latino union leaders, the AFL-CIO came out in support of legalization of unauthorized workers. Together with their families and other forces in the Latino community, these workers sought support for reform everywhere they could. In Chicago, Latinos staged a downtown pro-immigrant rights rally in September 2000 with an approximate attendance of 10,000 people. Since the late 1990s, new groups such as Enlaces America (EA)[1] engaged in capacity building among immigrant organizations in major cities of the country. The issue of immigration reached a critical moment during President Bush's first year in office, when he promised immigration reform at a meeting with then-President Fox of Mexico. However, the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 not only removed the conversation from the table but added to the polarization that had begun in the 1990s.[2] Anti-immigration became a favorite

1 Established in 2002, EA continued the work of the US Advocates Network (1996–2001) to improve communication between human

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cause among hate groups that, according to the Southern Poverty Law Center (2008), grew from 602 in 2000 to 888 in 2007.

Reflecting this mood and continuing the work of the 1990s, the 109th Congress that took office in January 2005 engaged in a new offensive against immigrants and those fighting for their rights. The REAL ID Act attached in January 2005 to HR 1268, a military spending bill, passed the House and Senate without hearings and was signed into law by President Bush in May of that year. The Act imposed rigid driver's license requirements including proof of legal status and made it harder for people to obtain asylum by requiring corroborating evidence – almost impossible to obtain in most cases. States and localities introduced or passed their own bills against unauthorized and even authorized immigrants going as far as denying them the most basic services. Vicious circles ensued of anti-immigrant public sentiment, followed by introduction of anti-immigrant legislations and harassment and prosecution of people considered unauthorized.

In Washington DC *comprehensive* immigration reform stood for proposals with drastic enforcement and criminalization provisions. Latino and progressive groups countered with their own rights-based *comprehensive* demands. Opposition to legislative proposals, but specifically to the REAL ID, and demand for comprehensive immigration reform grew throughout 2005 in the Latino community. Despite consensus against the REAL ID Act, great disagreement existed about what to include in a bill that could be palatable to legislators. This disagreement continues to today as some leaders and advocates approach reform "pragmatically," seeking the best they can get, while others oppose compromises on immigrant rights and criminalization of unauthorized immigrants, or seek comprehensive pro-immigrant and pro-refugee reform.

This environment set the stage for the Border Protection, Anti-Terrorism, and Illegal Immigration Control Act (HR 4437) of 2005 (also known as the Sensenbrenner bill, after the main sponsor of this and the REAL ID Acts). Introduced on 6 December 2005, the bill passed the House Judiciary Committee two days later by a vote of 23–15. It was then brought to the floor and approved in record time by a 239–182 vote and sent to the Senate on 17 December. Almost everybody agrees that what brought to the streets millions of Latinos and thousands of others (the grievance) were provisions criminalizing unauthorized immigrants, or anybody lending them a hand. As one immigrant leader put it, "HR 4437 was the straw that broke the camel's back; it served as a wakeup call for the community."

Prior to the enactment of HR 4437, the movement had focused on immigrant assistance, sanctuary initiatives, letter writing, delegations to Washington DC and lobbying of elected politicians to oppose or promote legalization. In Chicago, anti-immigrant declarations of the local Minutemen Council in the summer of 2005 provided a spark that moved a priest and a radio DJ to advocate a mass protest. In July of the same year, an estimated 40,000 took to

rights and immigrant organizations toward integration of immigration policy and development. EA was instrumental in the foundation of NALACC.

2 Gallup's annual Minority Rights and Relations survey registered the second highest anti-immigration feelings ever following the September 11 attacks with 58 per cent asking for a cutback in immigration, a figure surpassed by the anti-immigrant backlash of California's Proposition 187 in the 1990s when two-thirds favored immigration cutbacks (Pew Hispanic Center, 2010).

the streets in the Mexican Back of the Yards neighborhood. The rally was the largest ever in Chicago neighborhoods. As part of a rating war between their stations, two popular Latino radio DJs played a major role in enticing people to attend. The rally showed the willingness of the community to raise its voice, the enormous ability of the Latino media to reach out to them and the power unleashed by repeated attacks on Latinos. The success of this mobilization encouraged leaders to adopt this strategy in more visible scenarios.

The 2006 and 2007 Latino Immigrant Mobilizations Against HR 4437

Interviewees (and materials) differed in their accounts of the 2006–2007 mobilizations, each emphasizing particular factors or actors; stories and materials highlighted different events and protagonists and spoke of converging and diverging processes between the leaders and organizations involved. Altogether, according to them, anti-immigrant bills, local, state and federal legislative initiatives and administrative measures such as those mentioned earlier, along with extensive deportations, anti-immigrant rhetoric and formation of hate groups, created a generalized sense of siege among Latinos that permeated all aspects of daily life. Unauthorized immigrants feared going out or sending their kids to school, and knocked on doors of churches, politicians, NGOs, the media, or attorneys to seek help. Relatives, neighbors, co-workers and friends felt their pain or were affected as well. People were anxious to act, and contacted community-based groups and institutions asking them for advice and leadership.

Latino grassroots groups and institutions did what they could to address these anxieties and impacts. Most groups staffing or leading the actions during this period were small, social service, adult education, daycare, training, job placement, housing, after-school, youth counseling and cultural groups or hometown associations. Fearing that involvement in the movement, and especially drastic actions, might alienate funders, they acted cautiously. Although at times joining coalitions to engage in contentious actions, for the most part they stayed within boundaries to avoid jeopardizing the institutions and funders they depend on.

Interviewees considered the participation of “grasstops” Latino SMOs wanting. National groups (for example, the National Council of La Raza, the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund, the National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials, the League of United Latin American Citizens or the Puerto Rican Legal Defense and Education Fund) did some lobbying and information gathering and dissemination while continuing to address some inequities through the courts, but did not play much of a role in the mobilizations and actions or in comprehensive legislative

initiatives.[3] Other recently formed entities such as Instituto de los Mexicanos en el Exterior (IME)[4] and NALACC – a coalition of Latino groups formed to advance a pro-immigrant agenda – contributed by engaging leaders from throughout the country in the conversation and by coordinating actions nationally.

The timing and fast track approval of HR 4437 caught the community by surprise. Still, as people learned about it, pressure and proposals to oppose it built up among the grassroots, permeating encounters and forums and increasingly airing in local media. Some groups and local institutions contacted legislators; intensified immigrant rights education; held prayers and vigils; and sought new avenues to air their opposition. The anxiety and fervor expressed in actions such as Chicago's Back of the Yards rally planted the idea of a mass reaction against anti-immigrant legislation and rhetoric that spread like a fire in the first months of 2006. People in different scenarios reached the conclusion that attacks had gone too far, and that Latinos had to react *en masse* to oppose them or bear their devastating consequences for years to come. National and local grassroots encounters discussed how to do it: an alliance of Mexican political parties, meeting to demand the right to vote abroad in the 2006 Mexican elections, considered convening mass mobilizations but decided that it was not proper for them to do so as it could be interpreted as interference in US affairs; NALACC and IME spoke of concerted national mobilizations; academics and activists meeting in California floated the 10 March date. Thus, a few leaders that had started meeting in Chicago early in 2006 felt ready and convened a mobilization for that date. A snowball of communications brought attendance to preparatory meetings to nearly 180, mostly, but not exclusively, Latino groups and individuals.

The call spread by word of mouth, through networks, union halls, schools, churches, but especially the Latino media, urging everybody to participate. A lead group of members of social service agencies, churches, unions, hometown associations and federations, business groups and individuals from different ideological tendencies met at the home of the Federación de Clubes de Michoacán, Casa Michoacán, over logistics and resources. The meetings were open and followed a process of lengthy debates/consensus decision-making. In the words of a participant,

> [P]eople decided to hold a march … And then the planning started and there was this broad table … and there was about every constituency group and a layering of individuals that just came in, anybody. It was an open table guided by credible leadership in the community and people that had experience in that stuff … This is a lot more democratic, a lot more uncontrollable, a lot lengthier, and yet a lot closer … and it had some semblance of trying to have some rules. But they were broken at all kinds of different moments. … I would have a hard time myself, having been

3 Although we did not directly examine the reasons for this, grasstop Latino groups have been criticized for their distance from the base that critics associate with their efforts to gain recognition or to avoid jeopardizing their funding and standing; their composition (mainly middle and upper classes), or the cooptation that comes with the circles they frequent and depend on.

4 In 1990, Mexico created the Foreign Ministry's Program for Mexican Communities Abroad and, in 2000, the Presidential Office for Mexicans Abroad. The Foreign Ministry then established the Instituto de los Mexicanos en el Exterior (IME) in 2003 to link Mexicans in the United States and Canada with Mexico and to advise government on how to relate to them. IME has an Advisory Board of more than 100 counselors that linked Mexican leaders in these three countries and

has become an expedient network for coordination of actions across borders, states and cities.

> involved in it, to point to anyone specific, any group, or person, or individual that can actually claim ownership. It was as collective as it could be. I was happy to have a voice in it. I was happy to have relationships with all these people, where we could take a vote on some things, where we could dialogue and discuss and have our opinions reflected in the vote (Director of Social Agency).

This first rally in the country surpassed all expectations. Demonstrators formed a river between Union Park, one and a half miles west of downtown, and the Federal Plaza in downtown Chicago, marching along two parallel streets for at least one mile. Neither organizers nor the police were in control. But the mobilization was peaceful, and nobody was detained.

> We never imagined that it was going to be that big … We had a committee to work on safety and security but the day of the march we lost control of almost everything we had planned, because the numbers were huge … We asked the police if they were ready for the mobilization and they responded that … they had just handled thousands of people that had been recently on the streets when the White Sox won the pennant two weeks before. Obviously, they also lost control during our March 10 rally because they were not prepared for half a million people. The masses grew and continued growing as we left Union Park to the Federal Plaza … I was at the Federal Plaza organizing the stage and few groups came and took their place but a few minutes later people did not fit in the plaza anymore and took to the streets. Police were pushing people to stay in the Plaza and clear the streets but it was not possible: there was no room in the plaza; people were packed (Hometown association leader).

The march had a grassroots and spontaneous (in the words of interviewees, "artisan") flavor reflected in a sea of Latin American (mostly Mexican) flags, mariachis, hand-made signs, entire families including children and grandmothers, people in wheelchairs and crutches and speakers. It was a mix of parade and political protest, led by chants of "*hoy marchamos, mañana votamos*," and "*si se puede*." Themed *Todos somos America*, it was overwhelmingly Latino. Some businesses allowed their employees to attend, provided transportation or distributed water; people met at churches and rode in buses to the gathering site; youth participated in unusual numbers; and the Latino media transmitted the event.

With the success of this march, new actors jumped into the fray. So-called Washington Latino organizations set an April date for concerted national rallies that Chicago did not join because it had already had its own and was preparing a new rally for 1 May. Many cities organized their own events on this or other dates. In Chicago, new organizations and nationalities joined the 1 May march.

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This time, some lead organizers resented what they considered a takeover by non-Latino groups that "had stayed away previously but now wanted a piece of the pie." Some 10 March participants stayed home or organized separate events on the same date. Sources of contention included the push of SMOs participating for the first time to remove "folkloric" symbols, to exhibit only the US flag, and to make the message pan-ethnic and pan-institutional (moving non-Latino nationals, churches and unions to the front of the parade) – along with the initiative of unions and a local coalition to flood the parade with printed signs displaying their names–effectively taking symbolic ownership of the rally.

This rally included inside (Latino) and outside (non-Latino) supporters (churches, unions, elected officers, the Democratic party, and other nationals among others). Over half a million people marched in what was perhaps the largest rally in Chicago ever. Still, the bulk of them were Latino. The rally lacked the spontaneous flavor of 10 March. Civil rights, labor, anti-war and other traditional 1 May marchers rallied on behalf of other causes; as respondents said, it was formal, institutional and more *commoditized* [5] than the 10 March rally. Other activities against HR 4437 including a four-day march in September to Batavia, IL,[6] home of the Speaker of the House and calls on legislators; neighborhood events and vigils reinforced the message. Rallies were held in over 100 cities across the country throughout April and May. The message was loud and clear, enticing Congress to put the bill away.

At this point, we ask: did the grievance cause the mobilizations or did SMOs fabricate them? RMT might argue that the emergence of a critical resource mass caused the grievance to become a movement. Collective action theory might claim that the grievance caused leaders to surge, organized actions to form, and a movement to take shape. Marxism would emphasize class struggles against neoliberal elites seeking to remove worker protections and rights. NMT would point to identity politics and the increased immigration caused by globalization and PPM would focus on the anger and spontaneous actions of the aggrieved. On the side of RMT, organizations of different types and reaches grew or formed in the last two decades, increasing the immigrant community's ability to act on its own behalf. On the side of PPM, people acted out their frustration doing what the poor could do, demonstrate, disturb and protest: nothing could be less propitious to mass action than the anti-immigrant environment of the last two decades and the reactionary backlash following September 11, 2001; yet, the community responded *en masse*, defeating a bill that had majority support. On the side of NMT, Latino identity mobilized people to engage in defense of their own. According to interviewees, people pressured organizations and they had to do something (for which they had no allocated resources) *by the force of the circumstances*. Actually, large Chicago SMOs were reticent and voiced their doubts about the appropriateness or efficacy of mass protest.

5 *Commodification* is used to differentiate between the mass pressure approach and the formal, bureaucratic and institutionally driven approach favoring lobbying and bureaucratic negotiations. This difference reflects the division between organizations favoring a deep comprehensive reform that they believed depended on grassroots control of the movement and lobbying approaches that seemed more inclined to expert-driven negotiations.

6 This march was unique in that it was multiethnic and was organized

jointly between Latinos, Asians (especially Koreans) and Muslims.

The Aftermath of the Mobilizations

Rallies and other actions stirred up the political environment intensifying the actions of pro-and anti-immigrant forces. On 22 March 2007, Congressmen Flake (R-AZ) and Gutiérrez (D-IL) introduced the Security through Regularized Immigration and a Vibrant Economy Act (STRIVE) in the House. Soon thereafter, senators Ted Kennedy (D-Mass) and John McCain (R-AZ) introduced a similar bill in the Senate. Although seeking to "legalize" millions of unauthorized residents, both bills kept many of the drastic enforcement and criminalization provisions of HR 4437 and a Latino majority voiced opposition to them. According to a leader,

> SB2611 is a messy amalgam of positions, an aggregate of proposals that I named Frankenstein because it had Sensenbrenner's head, an arm of McCain, a leg of Kennedy and a foot of Luis Gutierrez. It was a gigantic mixture of disparate pieces … Since Democratic congressmen were involved, then some organizations thought that their obligation was to support it no matter the bad pieces it was composed of, the Republican pieces. Another sector said, 'Forget it. We don't have a commitment to the Democratic Party and don't mind criticizing it; we don't mind stating in public that it is a bad proposal.'

Locally, this new bill deepened divisions as people in the lead group split between those that wanted to get something passed, and others that were unwilling to settle for what they called a *reincarnated* HR 4437. STRIVE did not pass and many activists and legislators concluded that no legislation could be enacted before the upcoming presidential elections. Whereas some groups insisted on further mobilization, others focused on elections expecting that a Democratic president would advance the reform sought. The former argued that only this type of pressure would get politicians to respond. Neither the election of a president promising legislation in his first year in office nor a majority Congress, however, have delivered.

A July 2006 small rally on the anniversary of the Back of the Yards march promoted a moratorium on deportations. In 2007, another small rally celebrated the anniversary of 10 March 2006. Organizers of the 1 May 2006 rally joined forces again to hold a new one in 2007. When people thought that it would be poorly attended, a highly publicized immigration raid in the Little Village neighborhood of Chicago, reenergized people and the rally was again massive. Participants marched for multiple causes (particularly labor or human rights, the war, and immigration reform). Heated debates caused frustration within the lead group, divided between opposition and support for STRIVE. At the end, they agreed to keep the issue out of the rally but the support-STRIVE contingent did not honor

the agreement, further weakening the collective that could not coalesce thereafter.

Anti-immigrant forces, US immigration agencies, legislators and hate groups intensified their vigilante actions, legislative initiatives and rhetoric against unauthorized workers and immigrants in general. While hate groups continue to increase, ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement) has been beating its own deportation records – both internally and at the border – each year with 206,400 reported cases in 2006 and 280,500 in 2007 (mostly Mexicans). Then, in the first three months of 2008, 18 anti-immigration bills were introduced in Congress. Between 2005 and 2009, ICE's budget grew from 3.5 to 5.9 billion, allowing for intensified anti-immigrant rallies and actions. Raids and deportations continued to climb after President Obama took office. Altogether, the community felt that the actions of ICE and anti-immigrant forces were orchestrated to intimidate the movement. Most recently, passage of SB 1070 in Arizona, criminalizing unauthorized immigrants, brought people back to the street to rally for and against the bill.[7] Many other states and even municipalities are drafting similar legislation.

7 A national poll of 1016 adults revealed that 62 per cent of Americans favored the Arizona Law (Talev, 2010); over 30 states have enacted laws or engaged in actions against unauthorized immigrants.

Forces Involved

A majority of Latino organizations, institutions and persons played a role in the mobilizations; most visible were social service nonprofits, coalitions and networks; hometown associations and their federations, youth, churches, volunteers, businesses, advocacy groups and the community itself.

The group that met to agree on the strategies and details of the movement (the lead group) consisted primarily of social service organization staff. Although some groups followed models tying social services to political education, most were typical non-profit service delivery agencies lacking movement resources or skills. These limitations caught up with them and the effort drained already overstretched staffs and budgets. As one representative of an adult education organization explained,

> Not only are social service organizations caught up in the immediate need, but they barely move from payroll to payroll … The ways in which organizations are funded limit what they can do: they do what funders are willing to fund. This implies a high level of dependence and makes these organizations irrelevant [in the pursuit of change] … Funders tell you what song to sing.

Yet, the organizations' day-to-day work with immigrants helped develop the awareness that made a difference when the conjuncture and need came up. Altogether the high responsiveness of non-profit staff, their enthusiasm and

willingness to put routines aside "to answer the call of duty," was a great testimony of community capacity. Although they were not organizing groups, they joined in and learned *sobre la marcha*.

National forums such as IME and NALACC brought together leaders from across the land, generating networks and conversations that helped coordinate national actions. They operated as ad-hoc, informal committees keeping each other abreast of local events and joining in solidarity actions – hosting, for instance, marches when they passed through their localities, holding multi-site events or agreeing on dates for marches across the land.

Hometown associations and their federations surprised everybody: controlled by the membership, they had freedom to determine their agendas and became major assets with their enthusiasm, independence, commitment and ability to reach out to and mobilize *paisanos*.

> One piece of good news came from the hometown organizations and their federations … They got into the organizational process so much that Casa Michoacán became the main headquarters of the organizational process … They emerged as a new social subject and continue developing their capacity to act (Director of national organization).

Youth were particularly active mobilizing around their educational institutions or lending their energies to community organizations and institutions serving them or their families. Their large and enthusiastic participation in mobilizations was a major asset.

As the principal conveners of Latinos, churches became meeting places, mobilizing or encouraging their members around calls for social justice and solidarity. Many volunteers organized around churches, nonprofits, schools and universities or clubs. Although smaller in numbers, advocacy organizations joined the mobilizations wholeheartedly. Also contributing were Latino and even non-Latino businesses with Latino employees. Business owners that were immigrants themselves joined in solidarity with their own workers and families. But the community itself was the most important participant. Not only did it pressure Latino institutions and groups to participate and lead, but it organized itself, formed groups, provided the energy and produced what may be the largest numbers of participants in mass mobilizations in the city ever. The community made the difference demonstrating high levels of consciousness of oppression, at the intersection of race, class and immigrant condition.

Dynamics of Community Organization Participation

Latino organizations grew significantly in the last decades. Many of them formed to serve immigrants; they learned along the way about their hardships,

friends and foes. They kept the pro-immigrant movement alive in the worst of times, while providing support to immigrants and their families. Yet, we cannot jump to the conclusion that they *caused* the movement on their own or *fabricated* the 2006–2007 mobilizations. The attacks of September 11, 2001 unleashed a conservative ideological frenzy that scapegoated particular segments of US society – especially Third World immigrants and unauthorized residents. Conservatives very successfully manipulated an economic environment of crisis and insecurity to steer the anger of the US population against non-white immigrants (browns in particular). In this environment, HR4437 provided *the last straw* as it threatened to turn nearly a fourth of Latinos into felons and far many others into accomplices, to further family separation, and increase hostility against the community. This conjuncture so cornered Latinos that they could not sit and wait. The bill provided the spark, bringing them together perhaps as never before around the common purpose of defeating it, and asking for human rights-based, de-racialized immigration reform. In the words of the participants:

> Twelve million unauthorized immigrants, related to another 24 million people that are going to be affected, that is bigger than some nations. We got a nation within a nation that is being oppressed … HR 4437 took people to the streets … Those calling the march … were only the voices of the movement (Long-time community organizer).

> It was a spontaneous demonstration of duty … It started with the community pushing us from outside … Our role was to manage, to provide the logistics … Years of frustration and anger found a channel to express themselves … It was a convergence of emotions and energies that did not have much to do with the level of community organization but had much to do with the urgency to give that energy a positive outlet … it was a brief convergence of interests … It was a conjuncture, spontaneous, unexpected, similar to mass reactions to natural disasters (Director of national immigration organization).

> This is the first time we work together … The mobilization brought together people that did not talk to each other, organizations that never interacted … It forged relationships that continued afterwards (President of SMO).

Although non-Latino groups and resources joined in for the 1 May 2006 and 2007 marches, Latinos were a majority by far and carried the bulk of the effort with meager resources – in contrast with RMT suggestions (Jenkins, 1983, 533; McCarthy and Zald, 1977) that professionals acting on behalf of the aggrieved – rather than the self-advocacy and pressure of the community

itself – carry out movements. Although non-Latino SMOs contributed, they did not play a central role, and actually became yet another source of tension.

As mentioned earlier, two main contending approaches caused tension among lead organizers. At one end were Alinsky-inspired, pragmatic SMOs[8] (interviewees called this approach the American tradition) operating along the lines of RMT and pursuing institutionally sanctioned strategies and "winnable" actions. They had dedicated staff and resources to organize on a full time basis. Entering the fray for the second mobilization of 1 May 2006, most of them stayed away from other rallies, showing skepticism about this strategy or arguing afterwards that it had already achieved what it possibly could. Instead, they prioritized lobbying and electoral over contentious politics. At the other end were those that believed in the need for mass education and militancy (the Latin American tradition). This group sought a package of human and worker rights for all immigrants, focusing particularly on six demands: minimum waiting terms for immigration applicants, permanent residency, and a pathway to citizenship for the unauthorized, reform of political refugee and asylum policies to the highest international standards, a program for effective immigrant incorporation, US development partnerships with sending countries to improve their economies and political conditions so as to retain workers in their places of origin, de-militarization of the US-Mexico border, and creation of a foreign workers program including a pathway for pursuing permanent residency. Taking inspiration from the Chicano and Puerto Rican movements in the United States and from Mexican and Central American experiences of popular struggle,[9] the latter sought a combination of mass education and resistance. Whereas the first group was willing to settle for a feasible policy or a stepped up set of reforms, the latter believed that such a policy would come at the expense of a majority among the aggrieved, and that strategies of mass contention could put the necessary pressure to advance the reform sought. These excerpts illustrate their positions:

> [non-Latino SMO1] has the Alinsky format. We are looking for winnable strategies and … are weary of movements sometimes … Once people started meeting … our members said, 'Oh my God, there are so many people there' … [SMO1] thought 'Wow … we want to support this effort.' … Later we decided that 'Well, we have done some good marches but now we have to focus on the lobbying aspect of it… We are not going to do marches anymore, we had the bigger marches we ever can get; now we can use that power to go after the politicians'… [SMO1] tends to be more aligned with the Chicago style of organizing which is very machine-oriented, you know, this relationship and that relationship will move into this point and we get to this… The IAF [Industrial Area Foundation] model is a power model that means that everything is based on

8 Alinsky developed and practiced his organizing model in Chicago. The Industrial Areas Foundation continued his legacy beyond Chicago. Various groups in Chicago follow his model or take inspiration from it. Practitioners of this model clashed with organizers schooled in traditions of popular struggles throughout Latin America that also inspired the Chicano and Puerto Rican Independence movements.

9 Participants in the lead group included political refugees or immigrants who had participated in movements against abusive regimes in Latin America.

> self-interest: you cut deals with people. It is a quid pro quo… It is a power brokering model, cutting deals, bathrooms, cigar-smoking, Chicago, Capone… [SMO1 and SMO2] are going to maximize their influence and they are going to claim as much as they can to secure the right funding and to secure the goals of the organization. This is first and foremost for the organization, that it has to build power (Youth organizer).

> [Latino SMO3 and SMO4] are not organizations committed to the immigration movement. They are groups with budgets and structures, with 20 full time employees… They are not going to take directives from the immigrant movement. They are multi-million corporations that decide what to do… I told [name of person from a non-Latino SMO], 'if you are using your money to take the immigration movement to a politics of electoral support on behalf of the Democratic Party, we have a major conflict.' This is not the movement… We organize by talking in the radio, the television, the block and the church; we call on people to fight; we inform them … It is a movement without visible leaders… We struggle because people push us; when people push, leaders emerge… It is wrong to appoint leaders and kneel in front of them… If we depend on such leaders we are very vulnerable… Leaders come and go but the movement has to continue… There are jealousies… Each cause has a name… and *don't dare to get into his turf* because he is the owner… We cannot wait indefinitely on the Democratic Party; we have to call on people to march again, recover the base movement (Advocate of militancy position).

> Some people say that marches do not work in this society because they are intimidating. However, they work in the Latino community; they are a mechanism to send a message. They are critical ways to protest and demand changes in Latin America (Union leader).

> At the end, what we are looking for is not to create a movement; what we are looking for is legalization (President of non-Latino SMO).

> When this division started happening, [non-Latino SMOs] started looking at the other folks as being too radical and not practical and these groups started seeing the [name of organization] folks as being too practical and too territorial (Youth leader).

The urgency of the situation and the mass push from below kept internal conflicts at bay in the oppositional phase, achieving the main objective of defeating HR 4437. Interviewees explained that it was far easier to mobilize people *against* than *for* an issue. Spokespersons from each side often spoke in

contending voices, eventually breaking apart unable to agree on the terms of an immigration reform and strategy they would all support. Latino leaders complained that there was far more passion, sense of urgency and commitment to a reform based on human rights on the part of immigrants than on the part of non-Latinos or Latinos not directly affected by the issue.[10] They claimed that leaders negotiating on behalf of others (especially if they were not part of the class at stake) were often more willing to make concessions on critical priorities, than people negotiating on their own behalf or sharing the condition of those for whom they advocated.

10 Responding to a reviewer suggestion that differences could be associated with origin, we divided sources by US-and non-US-born Latinos but found no trend. Both positions included people in each of these two categories. It would be worthwhile, however, for researchers to examine this possibility further.

Organizational Capacity

We can now revisit the question: *what did the mobilizations reveal about the capacity and infrastructure of the Latino community?* Any response would be relative to the criteria used to measure capacity. Given our concerns with mainstream criteria, we leaned on the history and dynamics of this experience. Foremost is the question of whether – or the extent to which – SMOs produced the movement, and how much this phase advanced it. Although playing a major role, most agencies did not fit the SMO definition, nor did industry SMOs produce the marches; research exposed a messier picture than theories would suggest. Depicting the mobilizations as a special moment in the immigration movement, Flores-González and Gutiérrez (2010) and Pallares (2010) highlighted the community's organizational structure, but gave most importance to the grievance and mobilizations. Our sources agreed on the critical role of mobilizations in defeating HR 4437 and advancing the movement. They also suggested that the main protagonist was the Latino community itself and that the grievance (the bill) was "the last straw." Based on our data, we advance next some insights that this experience and moment suggested.

Latinos have made major strides in developing an organizational/institutional structure of support and advance whose numbers, layers, diversity, influence and standing grew steadily in the last two decades. They showed themselves to have the skills, understanding and willingness to react collectively to abuse and to seek avenues for advancement. By circumstance or choice most Latino groups deal with or are affected by immigration and have been involved in this issue (whether on and off, or on an ongoing basis).[11] Although most are not SMOs, they ended up playing such a role. As defensive as this phase of the movement was, it showed that Latino organizations had the will and ability to support such actions. One major aspect that movement and capacity theory do not mention is the ability to learn in the field and the flexibility to adjust.

Meanwhile, the long-term record suggests that organizations have played a critical role in movement maintenance. The movement has gone through

11 Although most people classified as Latino are citizens (62 per cent) or authorized immigrants (over four fifths), labels

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various stages and levels of intensity, and has required a diversity of skills. Momentum is difficult to maintain when dealing with matters that may take a long time to resolve or require systemic change. On the side of RMT, movement maintenance depends largely on steady and appropriate resources and dedicated and skilled organizations. This research suggested that Latinos need to improve on this, but also indicated that the cause might surpass the possibilities of an RMT type of strategy. For many interviewees, a major lesson was that Latinos could not depend on non-Latino SMOs to address these types of challenges. Thus, they need to add to their own SMO capacity or redirect existing organizations to assume this role. Respondents identified a major gap between so-called Washington SMOs and the community. Not only are Latino grasstops disengaged from the bases but they tend to "play it safe" and "go through 'the established channels'," avoiding strategies of contention and mass mobilization that, in this case, proved necessary and risky for them.

Still, the movement seemed stalled for years until the mobilizations energized it and brought the community itself to the fore, showing the potential of mass mobilization and the level of commitment and awareness of lay Latinos. The heavy role RMT and capacity theory ascribe to organizations in dragging the community could lead to the assumption that only organizational capacity is a sufficient condition for success. However, had Latinos waited for their respective organizations to defeat the bill through lobbying and negotiation, it would have most likely passed the Senate and been signed into law. Latinos could not possibly afford to wait for resources and SMOs to carry them. Although non-Latino forces helped, they did not make the difference between success and failure, either. Poor people's movement strategies and direct mass participation showed themselves to be very strong in this phase of the movement. Although the circumstances and the moment predicted full success on the part of anti-immigrant forces, the mobilizations took back some of their momentum. Existing organizations jumped to the forefront, and successfully put together the logistics and led the actual mobilizations. Ultimately, however, neither record-breaking mass mobilization nor the actions of organizations could advance the sought-for progressive reform.

Although a majority of Latino interviewees emphasized mobilization and direct action, they acknowledged the importance of resources and organizations in articulating the message and carrying the movement over the long hawl. Yet, disintegration of the collective once the bill was taken off the table, the tremendous difficulty of organizational leaders to advance the coalition approach carved out initially, their inability to agree on the major aspects of the reform sought, and the challenges of bringing along outside parties proved particularly challenging for the long-term effort. But we cannot discount the tremendous difficulty of advancing progressive legislation within the current anti-immigrant environment, nor the insurmountable resources available to anti-immigrant forces. Such challenges suggest that, regardless of resources and

such as undocumented or immigrant are often extended to all Latinos. Ultimately, condition, identity, racism and disadvantage extend to or include all "Latinos" – turning them into a "community" by choice or ascription.

capacity, the success or failure of movements may be less predictable than RTM purports – and perhaps as much a matter of circumstances, capacity, resources and mass action.

Tensions and Structural Limitations

Discussions of RMT and capacity tend to overlook constraints or the extent to which organizations have equal ability or opportunity to develop and break through barriers. Along these lines, we identified factors that limit the ability of organizations to influence change, especially their institutional statuses, race/class and the dynamics of the marketplace.[12]

Arguing that the issues they focus on are often systemic, interviewees felt that the statuses and forces ruling organizations and providing resources often prevented them from engaging in the deep changes in the structures of opportunity and wealth distribution needed. To begin with, their funding is meager compared to need and task, and is available primarily for band-aid actions; thus, groups have to focus on what is palatable to funders or to the institutions on which they depend or need to influence. This has become particularly true today, when grassroots organizations are funded primarily to provide social services that the state traditionally offered, or to develop areas in which the market failed – without the resources of the state or the market. Organizing, advocacy and movement work or community education are major casualties: support for such activities is scanty and often privileges groups that learn to dance on the tightrope without going too far in their challenges of the *status quo* or that operate as quasi-businesses. The structure favors "safe" strategies, groups and leaders within recurring circles of mutual support.

Leaders insisted on the need to change the discussion on immigration from one of labor supply and border control to one of fairness and rights. Since pro-immigrant groups[13] – perhaps best positioned to advance this approach – do not receive support to articulate and deliver this message to the public and legislatures, they are at a disadvantage *vis-à-vis* the extreme Right. This is why staff in social service agencies had to step in, stretching their resources, and risking alienating their funders but were still unable to counter a well-funded Right, often in control of the media and with the power and resources to manipulate electoral politics and policymaking.

Underlying such limitations are the marketplace dynamics that RMT advocates. Perhaps nobody would expect support for system change from the *status quo*. To the extent that conflicts threaten the *status quo*, funders may support limited and controlled adjustments while discouraging PPM strategies. The more movements resemble industries or seek *status quo* acceptance, the less they can affect pro-immigrant change, and the more they resemble a marketplace. In fact, large SMOs often acted as if they were trading goods

12 Interestingly, hometown associations with the independence to determine agendas and priorities said that their inability to access funders and reliance on volunteerism limited them as well on what or how much they could do.

13 Debates of unauthorized immigration have not paid attention to US denial of refugee status to Central Americans fleeing from oppressive regimes or the forceful displacement caused by paramilitary, military and guerrillas in countries like

rather than negotiating the fate of millions; they were the most likely to advocate *status quo* directions. The experience showed that the need to please institutional supporters ties the hands of SMOs or forces "movements" to "negotiate" anything.[14] Supporters can pull the plug at any time forcing the hand of leaders. It makes a difference whether resources go into media advertisements and experts, or into community building, awareness, participation and empowerment.

Conservative powerhouses have advocated militarization of the US-Mexico border, have conditioned immigration to market demand, or have been concerned with the potential impact of Latino immigration on "the balance of the races." Differently, the movement has emphasized the human face of immigrants, arguing that they are seeking the same opportunities and have the same dignity and aspirations as European immigrants while contributing to the United States as much as them – and mitigating the pressure and suffering of the sending countries; along these lines, they have advocated a paradigm of rights, opportunity, family reunification and community integrity. Exposing one of the major preoccupations of anti-immigrant forces, the US media has focused primarily on the Latino face of immigration. Clearly, as media accounts and as interviewees suggested, the anti-immigration movement often stands as a code for racist projects blaming in this case Latinos for the problems of white and even black America.[15]

Mobilizations, Movement and Community Capacity

When asked about the capacity of the community as reflected in the mobilizations and the immigration movement, interviewees presented a positive picture illustrated by the ability of the community to put together the actions it did with the meager resources it had and to defeat HR 4437 against what might be the best-funded and formidable anti-immigrant forces ever. They also pointed to the growth and sophistication of Latino groups and institutions to service immigrants and to maintain the movement. Still, nobody posited that the mobilizations had been manufactured by SMOs; instead, our informants and data suggest that people had been the main protagonists; community ownership was perhaps the best example of the critical importance of direct community intervention, and constituted one of the major advances of the movement. The experience suggests that organizations are critical elements in advancing the interests of a community but that community capacity cannot be reduced to that of its organizations or to the often-static factors of capacity listed in the literature. Actually, organizational dynamics stood in the way, often causing confusion and division. The ability and willingness of the community to mobilize proved to be a major, often neglected source of capacity: it made the difference. Two additional achievements of the mobilizations were the

Colombia. They ignore the role of our government, immigration laws and US employers in enticing and maintaining unauthorized immigration. Those arguing that Latinos should follow the immigration process of Europeans do not realize that they are incomparable. Practically all European immigrants making it to the US shores originally were registered as authorized immigrants.

14 Morris and Herring (1987, 166) argue that "the interests of challenging groups cannot be realized through 'legitimate' means because governments respond to the interests of polity members only." And Dobson (2001) adds, "external support usually tames movements steering them toward the more conservative goals of elite funders."

15 A recent NBC/ MSNBC/ Telemundo poll found that 70 per

symbiosis between a mobilized community and its organizations and institutions, and the development of networks at all levels facilitating communication and action.

Breaking into the two positions mentioned earlier, interviewees tied success to strategy; one side argued that a mobilized and activist community had the best chance to put pressure on power to pass the reform it sought; and the other, favored electoral politics, lobbying and negotiation within dirigiste models – *à la* SMO. In many ways, mass contention held the clue as it pushed decision-makers beyond what institutional channels could. This research revealed a complex picture of community capacity, including organizations of all types, direct community involvement and determination, conventional and unconventional strategies, ability to learn and change course *sobre la marcha*, trouble-shooting, and less tangible factors such as identity, experience and awareness. But it also suggested that capacity is not enough when those in power lack the willingness to issue pro-immigrant reform.[16] Altogether, these considerations suggest that success, at least in this case, is not a simple matter of community capacity. Put to the test, the community delivered, but could not overcome the formidable forces standing in the way of reform. If anything, this experience demonstrated that, as critical as it is, capacity alone cannot explain success; thus, the importance of putting it in perspective and realizing that many of the challenges communities face surpass their self-help skills, or are beyond their control.

Regarding movement theories and their added explanatory power, no single one sufficiently explained community capacity or the mobilizations and movement. Organizational capacity applied best to movement maintenance. Intensification of attacks and the anger and frustration peaking with HR 4437 were major factors of mobilization. Still, alone they do not cause mobilization, nor set the tone: determination and circumstances can turn them into action; moreover, people rallied peacefully. Conjuncture, attacks, asphyxiation, self-mobilization and responsive organizations combined successfully against HR 4437. Still, we could not fabricate this combination and manufacture the same response in the future. In this phase, grievances and urgency seemed better mobilizers than SMO resources and capacity. Issues of justice, the racism involved in anti-immigrant projects and civil rights attracted institutions such as churches. Yet, these institutions have done little to pressure those in power into passing pro-immigrant reform. Also, evidence does not fit the concept of utilitarian rational actors but one of collective action, social awareness and self-defense. Far from coherent, centralized and unified, this movement phase included disparate forces and divisions, a plural leadership, and a strong cultural identity.

Elements of PPMT were present as well. People did what they could do best: raise their voice, show up, protest and demand. Along the lines of PPMT, interviewees criticized the divisions and distractions dirigiste SMOs caused in

cent of whites supported Arizona's SB 1070 law compared to only 31 per cent of Latinos. Although the position of blacks is less clear, many of them have bought into the claims that Latinos immigrants (documented and undocumented) take jobs and services *that belong to them* (Omi, 2001).

16 A major challenge to the advance of Latino community issues (not discussed here) is the low electoral power of Latinos.

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their (perhaps justified) efforts to gain visibility and ownership, and argued that a community representing itself could best assess what to negotiate. But, again, mass actions could not move legislators to produce a pro-immigrant reform, and in fact met with a backlash. Whereas people's mobilization sent a strong enough message against HR 4437 and anti-immigrant forces, it has not mustered enough support to advance new legislation. RMT called attention to the need for organizational capacity to sustain the movement, carry out the mandate and agenda of the community and to mobilize resources. Most likely, the movement needs both PPMT and RMT.

The experience also included elements of NMT and class. Latino identity and solidarity were critical in mobilizing the community. Increases in worker abuses related to a growing use of unprotected labor within a globalized model of devalorization of work brought labor and class to the fore – reflected in the involvement of unions. Civil rights sectors from the black community expressed solidarity and joined in some actions – as did other nationals in support of their unauthorized immigrants. With Pallares (2010) we found that this phase of the immigration movement was multi-sector, multi-class, multi-racial, multi-cause, heterogeneous, at the same time organized and spontaneous, united and divided.

Closing Remarks

This study suggests that movement and capacity are dynamic concepts that cannot be encapsulated in static theories or measurements. Theirs is a world of intricate contradictions and turns rather than one of straightforward rationality and predictability. Although a helpful point of reference, capacity better fits the actions of agents operating in predictable environments and holding control of their outputs. Hence, when used in the context of community struggles, they should be constructed contextually and flexibly, realizing the tremendous uncertainty/obstacles and the transformative nature of their work. Although some aspects may be replicable (especially when dealing with partial reforms or less controversial issues), for the most part they are constantly reshaped by the actions and interactions involved. Generally speaking, capacity increases the chances of success; however, given their high levels of unpredictability, neither movements nor capacity come in standard sizes: each case may entail different forces and require different actions and skills. To advance causes such as the immigrant movement, communities cannot afford to limit themselves to "the established channels" and, in fact, may be more effective when they don't. Had the Civil Rights movement depended on the rules of engagement of the *status quo*, we might have never had Civil Rights legislation.

Our assessment of the evidence, insights and reflections presented here shows advances in Latino community capacity and, specifically, in the immigration

movement. Contrary to the often depreciatory (as in instinctive or pre-rational) tone some theories have ascribed to people's resistance, revolt and *spontaneity*, our research suggests that theirs was far more than an emotional reaction, as they engaged in conscious resistance, going at times as far as advocating for the right to immigrate or receive asylum, even if unauthorized, when the circumstances oblige. Most importantly, the mobilizations inaugurated a phase of direct and active resistance. Along the way, the experience increased the community's determination and capacity to act and assume risk against vengeful anti-immigrant legislative proposals. The most recent of them has been the months-long opposition to Arizona's SB 1070 law of 2010 whose implementation, as of this writing, was successfully blocked in federal district court (at least its most damaging clauses). Their repeated slogan "*no tenemos miedo*" (we are not afraid) further testifies to the tremendous resilience and determination of the community. This is a capacity that carried the Civil Rights movement to success and that theories often neglect.

Immigration has become the main challenge for the Latino community that is, in turn, becoming the favorite target of xenophobia and racism. For the first time in the history of Latinos in the USA, surveys are showing the public's perception that racism against them is higher than against blacks.[17] Although complicating the struggle for reform, racial overtones have helped unite a majority of the community around a movement that some have depicted as the Latino civil rights movement. These are factors of capacity that we did not foresee when we started this research; they have helped advance the movement from a defensive to a pro-active stage. The momentum progressively generated in years of resistance and action, especially in the last five years, may now move the administration Latinos helped elect to do something.[18]

17 In a 2009 Pew Hispanic Center poll asking about groups "discriminated against a lot," 25 per cent rated blacks at the top in 2001 – followed by Latinos with 18 per cent; these figures reversed in 2009 with Latinos at 23 per cent and blacks at 19 per cent (Pew Hispanic Center, 2010).

18 After promising to submit to Congress an immigration reform in his first year in office, President Obama has not showed leadership on the matter. Indeed, perhaps trying to

About the Authors

John J. Betancur has combined academic work at the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC) with community activism around black-Latino relations, community development and gentrification. He holds a PhD in Public Policy Analysis and a Master's Degree in Urban Planning and Policy from UIC and other degrees from Colombian universities. Co-editor of the book *The Collaborative City* and multiple publications on the above topics, he is co-editing a book on neoracism and co-authoring a second one on neighborhood change today. Dr. Betancur is co-founder of two Latino organizations in Chicago and has worked or volunteered in community development in various capacities (director, staff, board member and volunteer).

Maricela Garcia is director of capacity building and institutional development at the National Council of La Raza. She is former director of the Illinois

Coalition for Immigrants and Refugee Rights, co-founder of the National Alliance of Latin American and Caribbean Communities, and a leader in the immigrant rights mobilizations. A leader in the student movement for social change in Guatemala, she had to leave during the civil war and lobbied at the United Nations to maintain the international community monitoring human rights compliance in Guatemala. Her publications include *An American Agenda from a Latino Perspective, Unaccompanied Minors: Challenges and Opportunities*, and *Global Economics and Migration.*

avoid clashes with anti-immigrant forces, his government has increased deportations while blaming Republicans for inaction on this front and warning that unauthorized immigrants will have to pay a high price for legalization.

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