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LOCAL PATH DEPENDENCY AND SCALE SHIFT IN SOCIAL MOVEMENTS: THE CASE OF THE US IMMIGRANT RIGHTS MOVEMENT

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ABSTRACT. This paper examines how social movement organizations shift scale through the case of the immigrant rights movement. This was largely a local movement for the first decades of its existence. However, in the late 1990s, repressive federal policies increased the salience of national politics for many organizations. While recognizing the importance of national politics, many organizations remained mostly engaged in local politics for nearly a decade. The aim of this paper is to examine why immigrant rights organizations stayed local for so long after the threat shifted to the federal level and why they actually shifted to the national scale when they did. It does so by focusing on the case of Los Angeles. *Keywords: social movements, immigrant activism, path dependency, scale shift.*

The origins of today's immigrant rights movement in the United States are local. In the 1980s and 1990s, immigrant rights organizations grew in terms of size and political impact in gateway cities like Los Angeles, San Francisco, Chicago, and New York. New organizations fought restrictive local policies, provided services, formed worker centers, and developed alliances with other social justice organizations. They forged strong ties with immigrant communities and developed productive alliances with other advocacy organizations, elected officials, and philanthropic foundations. Their power to achieve their specific goals stemmed from their abilities to mobilize local alliances and relations. While immigrant rights organizations were well-embedded in their specific cities, they only had weak-tie connections to similar organizations in other cities.

By the early 2010s, the geography of this social movement had changed dramatically. Many of the large local organizations that had emerged in the 1990s were now heavily involved in a series of national coalitions fighting for federal immigration reform. They targeted the federal government, developed countrywide coalitions, and derived much of their funding from national foundations. Most stayed headquartered in their cities of origin, but many had become incorporated into a social movement with a national infrastructure that aimed to change federal immigration policy. The Los Angeles-based immigrant rights organization, Center for Humane Immigrant Rights of Los Angeles (CHIRLA), typifies these geographical changes. It emerged in the late 1980s and focused on grassroots immigrant workers' empowerment and working with allies to pass favorable local policies in Southern California. By 2018, CHIRLA was

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fully enmeshed in national networks, opened an office in Washington D.C. and dropped "Los Angeles" from its name. Organizationally, politically, and symbolically, CHIRLA had moved decidedly in a national direction.

The shift to the national scale and the ultimate spatial transformation of the immigrant rights movement did not happen automatically. Activists did not simply perceive federal opportunities and threats and then swiftly shift the scale of their movement. The federal government began to seriously threaten undocumented immigrants in the mid-1990s, but it took approximately ten years for organizations like CHIRLA to make the shift to the national scale. These organizations had great difficulty moving away from a dense cluster of local relations and into national politics, only succeeding to do so in the latter part of the 2000s. Far from being inevitable and automatic, the shift was a slow and complex process. The intent of this paper is to address two empirical questions: Why did organizations stay in localities when the threat to their interests shifted to the federal government? And, why did activists eventually shift to the national scale when they did?

The literature on the spatiality of social movements provides important concepts, but it provides little insight into why organizations get stuck in certain places and why they shift scale when they eventually do (Miller 2000; Herod and Wright 2002; Sikkink 2005; Tarrow and McAdam 2005; Leitner and others 2008; Nicholls and Uitermark 2016). This paper draws on the path-dependency literature to address this specific issue (Storper 1997; Pierson 2000; Bathelt and Gluckler 2003; Martin and Sunley 2006; Scott 2006). This literature suggests that relational interdependencies at particular scales can enhance returns on collective action early on. But, after time elapses, these same interdependencies can lock actors into geographically circumscribed relations, making it difficult to respond effectively to substantial changes in the playing field (Storper 1997; Bathelt and Gluckler 2003; Martin and Sunley 2006). The greater the dependency on scale-specific relations, the more difficult it is for actors to shift to new geographic scales, especially when those actors are resource poor. Scholars writing on path dependency also suggest that organizations innovate under conditions of crisis, and particularly when organizational survival is at stake (Pierson 2000). Thus, we adopt these insights to explain for stickiness of places for certain social movement organizations and the conditions that permit a change in the scale of collective action.

The Geography of Social Movements and Scale Shift

Scholars have mapped out core mechanisms and processes constituting social movements, including the centrality of resources, networks, discursive frames, political and normative opportunities, and emotions (McAdam and others 2001). Building on the social movement tradition, other scholars have worked to

understand the geographic underpinnings of contentious politics. These contributions have revealed two important facets of the spatiality of social movements.

First, a number of scholars argued that place was a central aspect of social movements (Miller 2000; Martin 2003; Martin and Miller 2003; Nicholls and Uitermark 2016). Paul Routledge introduced the concept of "terrain of resistance" and argued, "The analysis of the settings where social relations are constituted (locale) and the wider socio-political processes at work (location) have contributed to an understanding of why the Baliapal movement emerged where and when it did" (1997, 239). Routledge's work inspired other scholars to examine the role of place in social movements (Pierce and others 2011; Arampatzi 2017). Nicholls and Uitermark (2016), for instance, argued that place-based relations are necessary for transforming sparks of resistance into collective political forces. Relations forged in places through sustained face-to-face interactions enable actors to develop trust with one another. For precarious groups like undocumented immigrants, gays and lesbians, and African-Americans, trust in one's group is a necessary condition to overcome institutional and symbolic violence.

Second, other scholars have argued that social movements shift geographical scales to achieve their goals (Miller 2000; McAdam and others 2001; Herod and Wright 2002; Sikkink 2005; Tarrow and McAdam 2005; Leitner and others 2008; de Moor 2018). Scale shift involves, Doug McAdam, Sidney Tarrow, and Charles Tilly argue, a "change in the number and [geographical] level of coordinated contentious actions to a different focal point, involving a new range of actors, different objectives, and broadened claims (McAdam and others 2001, 331). According to this definition, two distinct qualities constitute scale shift: shifting political targets ("focal points") to a new geographical level (local, regional, state, federal, international), and expanding networks to the actors able to pressure political targets at new geographical levels. Scale shift therefore entails vertical (targets up and down political levels) and horizontal (spread relations across space) moves.

Activists shift scale because "political opportunities" and threats may emanate from new geographical levels (Miller 2000; Sikkink 2005). Kathryn Sikkink, for instance, argues that, "Once activists become familiar with international institutions, and thus the opportunities they offer become visible, they may perceive more opportunities at the international level than at the domestic" (2005, 158). The perception of opportunities therefore precipitates changes in the scale of mobilization, especially when activists have relations with other activists (brokered or preexisting) at the new scale (Tarrow and McAdam 2005). In spite of the strength of this argument, activists may perceive new opportunities and have strategic relations, but they may still not shift scale. In such instances, they are stuck in place.

Several geographers have responded critically to the work on place and scale (Featherstone 2003, 2012; Marston and others 2005; Samers 2011; Woodward and others 2012). Michael Samers (2011) has argued that much of the scale literature has failed to adequately define scale. When it does, it does so in a way that suggests a fixed and essentialist hierarchy between upper and lower level spatial configurations. Instead, he advocates for the concept of "socioterritoriality" to understand the dynamic interplay between "movements of territorial fixity within the movements of extraterritorial flows and their social networks" (Samers 2012, 47). Other critics eschew the fixed and hierarchical character associated with scale (Featherstone 2003; Marston and others 2005). These scholars draw inspiration from Latour's critique that scale is, "'tied to an order relation that goes from top to bottom or from bottom to up—as if society really had a top and a bottom … " (Latour 1996, 371). David Featherstone adds that the scale literature, "sees resistances as primarily local unless movements actively 'jump scales' from local to regional, national or international, through their activity" (Featherstone 2003, 40). To break out of scalar thinking, Sallie Marston and her colleagues propose a "flat ontology" (Marston and others 2005), while John Allen proposes a topological reading of space (Allen 2011). These views suggest that multiple sites are intermeshed through geographically complex connections, forming broad relational constellations with variable power geometries.

These criticisms remind us that the focus on spatial fixity (whether through scales, territories, or place) can result in reifying socially constructed spatial configurations. Though social relations congeal temporarily into territories and scales, these spatial forms never become autarchic containers with sealed boundaries that restrict relations across them (Allen 2011).

Moreover, the dynamic interplay between temporary spatial fixity and ongoing flux of activist relations is central to understanding the spatiality of social movements. Our intention is therefore to identify the conditions that give rise to sticky activist places and the circumstances that prompt shifts to new geographic scales.

How Resource-Scarce Activists Shift Scale: Central Arguments

This section turns to the literatures on resource mobilization and path dependency to explain for the stickiness of certain places and the circumstances that precipitate shifts to new geographic scales. The paper employs terms such as "local" and "national" as ideal types and fully recognizes that there is not an absolute binary between the two.

Resources and Organizing at the Local Scale

Preferences for strategy—grassroots community activism versus building a national social movement infrastructure—shapes an organization's geographical reach, but

such preferences cannot be realized without the appropriate resources (McCarthy and Zald 1977; Staggenborg 1988; Walker 2014). John McCarthy and Mayer Zald (1977) distinguish between two types of resources: *money* (grants, donations, funds) and *labor* (mainly time and commitment of individuals).

Money is needed to build a costly organizational infrastructure to sustain countrywide campaigns over an extensive period of time. A social movement operating at the national scale requires large amounts of money to hire professional staff, build organizations, plan long-term goals, lobby elected officials in a nation's capital, mount a sophisticated communication campaign, and invest in far-reaching coalitions (Walker 2014; Nicholls 2019). Such a "formalised structure ensures," Suzanne Staggenborg maintains, "that there will be continuity in the performance of maintenance tasks and that the SMO will be prepared to take advantage of elite preferences and environmental opportunities" (1988, 597).

Financially poor organizations can certainly aspire to build a national-scale movement, but they often lack the money to do so. Such organizations are, however, not by any means consigned to the political margins. They can make up for the lack of money by relying on the second major resource highlighted above: labor (occasional volunteers, committed activists, sympathetic bystanders). Networks are crucial for recruiting people to contribute labor and other resources to high-risk forms of collective action (Gould 1995; McAdam 1986). Networks also generate trust and common norms between resource-poor social movement organizations, making it easier for any given organization or activist to provide another organization support over extended periods of time (Coleman 1988; Diani 2014). Lastly, human geographers suggest that proximity favors strong ties because it provides organizations and activists more opportunities to meet and develop common working practices, exchanges, conventions, and trust (Nicholls and Uitermark 2016; Routledge 2017). Thus, for financially poor organizations, capturing labor and other resources depends partially on nurturing strong relations between various activists and social movement organizations.

Following from these interventions, we argue that strong relations between geographically proximate allied organizations enable resource-poor organizations to recruit and retain people in campaigns. These people bring with them a wealth of additional resources, including knowledge of the playing field, information about openings and resources, cultural capital and status, and social connections to other actors far and near. Proximate, strong-tie relations are consequently one option to overcome financial deficiencies. This renders organizations dependent on local partners and allies for resources and the achievement of political goals.

Geographical Path Dependency and Scalar Lock-In

We turn to the path-dependency literature to explain for how resource-poor organizations get stuck in place (Storper 1997; Pierson 2000; Bathelt and Gluckler 2003; Martin and Sunley 2006; Scott 2006). Early in their development, organizations make decisions about how to leverage their relations to acquire more resources and achieve goals. When early decisions yield satisfactory returns, the path gains validation and alternative ways of doing things are closed off (Martin and Sunley 2006, 397). For resource-poor social movement organizations, dependency on proximate organizations and activists can result in scalar lock-in, essentially binding activists into a specific scale even when opportunities and threat shift elsewhere.

We suggest that financially poor organizations are especially vulnerable to scalar lock-in because they lack a reservoir of financial resources to experiment in new scales of political action. Scale shift for these organizations involves a transfer of resources from a scale that is yielding important returns – and where the effectiveness of organizational action can be more directly measured and assessed, not only by the organization but also by its membership and recruits – to a scale whose returns are still untested and uncertain. An investment in a new and uncertain political scale takes resources away from activities that may already be generating fruit. The barriers to scale shift mount when organizations depend on local funders (private philanthropies and government subsidies) for revenue as funding is tied to the performance of local activities and services. For organizations that are struggling to subsist, shifting to a new scale would place this essential revenue stream at risk. Thus, we argue that the more an organization benefits from the returns on scalar-specific relations (organizations and benefactors), the less likely the organization will shift scales.

Though strong local ties can result in important advantages for resource-poor organizations early in a trajectory, dependency can lock organizations into relations at a geographical scale even when threats and opportunities emerge from elsewhere. What had started as optimal relations under conditions of scarcity become shackles that can incapacitate an organization's abilities to respond to new threats and opportunities. Like firms that get entangled into a suboptimal path, social movement organizations can also become, "'locked' into apparently inferior forms or trajectories even though more efficient alternatives were or are possible" (Martin and Sunders 2006, 401). Thus, strong local relations are, we argue, paradoxical because they allow for financially poor organizations to achieve high mobilization capacities early in a trajectory, but relational interdependencies can eventually lock organizations into local battles when threats or opportunities emanate from elsewhere.

Scale Shift: Crisis and Relations

This section presents the last part of our argument. Scalar lock-in means that activists do not simply perceive new opportunities and threats, and proceed to shift scale. We suggest that there are two conditions that facilitate scale-shift. First and following from path-dependency literature, a crisis can loosen the grip of geographic path dependency and present geographic innovation (i.e., scale shift) as an option to overcome the crisis (Pierson 2000). Second, relations—either preexisting or brokered—to actors already operating in the new scale reduces uncertainty associated with change, thereby facilitating scale shift (McAdam and others 2001; Tarrow and McAdam 2005). Crises, we argue, provide motive for scale shift and relations to actors already operating at other scales provide the means to achieve the shift.

For social movement organizations, crisis often stems from growing resource competition followed by exogenous shock. The growing returns on certain strategies and local relations can draw in other organizations interested in capturing resources and power (Minkoff 1993; Vermeulen 2013). Newcomers often adopt the strategies and ideologies of the more established organizations in a bid to benefit from the network (Minkoff 1993). The influx of similar organizations generates increased demand on scarce resources, which can precipitate scarcity and competition. The influx of new organizations stresses the carrying capacity of local resource networks, while exogenous shocks, such as a sudden cut in funding from a benefactor, can transform stress into crisis. Paul Pierson (2000) argues that organizations respond to crisis by either sticking to the established strategy or by innovating. Those that opt for the first may continue to survive but often at a diminished level. Those that innovate adopt a new strategy that distinguishes them from competitors or shift to a new geographical scale with fewer competitors and more opportunities. Crisis consequently can prompt some organizations to risk stepping outside of their geographical comfort zone and seek out new forms of support elsewhere.

Achieving scale shift depends on the existence of relations to actors (organizations, funders, political allies) with access to networks and resources at those new scales (Tarrow and McAdam 2005). Relations, preexisting or brokered, provide an organization with the information needed to effectuate scale shift and access to resources needed to operate at the new scale successfully. These relations open the path to a new geographical world. Absent these relations, organizations contemplating scale shift face dramatically higher risks, which can reduce motive. Thus, crisis opens up the possibility of scale shift but the existence of relations at the new scale lowers risk and makes a change in scale more feasible.

In conclusion, this section proposes a three-prong argument to explain for the stickiness of certain places and the conditions that permit social movement organizations and activists to shift to new geographical scales. First,

organizations that are poor in financial resources can compensate for deficiencies by bolstering relations to recruits, allied organizations, and benefactors in their localities. Second, local relational interdependencies produce great benefits, but can also result in geographical-path dependencies, locking organizations into a specific scale even when threats and opportunities develop elsewhere. Lastly, crisis is the mother of geographical innovation because it loosens the grip of relational interdependencies and compels organizations to reevaluate their spatiality. Some may opt to stay the course and not innovate, but others may be tempted to shift to new geographical scales when relations permit them to do so.

Path dependency and resource mobilization models often employ rational-actor assumptions. Rather than reproduce these assumptions, we suggest that activists are deeply socialized into specific activist worlds. Through these interactions, they develop a "secondary habitus" (Bourdieu and Passeron 1977) consisting of tacit knowledge, political and ethical norms, complex emotions, ideological frameworks, and identities. Rather than responding mechanically and flawlessly to the changing rules of the game, the secondary habitus generates a "feel for the game" that both constrains and liberates activists (Bourdieu 1990, 63). A well-honed habitus can constrain activists by over validating strategies and practices that are consistent what has always made sense. But, a strong feel for the game can also make activists more reflexive and permit them to respond to new opportunities when they present themselves.

Methods

Los Angeles is both an exceptional case for immigrant rights activism but also rather representative. It is exceptional because it has been a major center of immigrant rights activism from the 1970s onwards (Corona 1994; Milkman 2005; Milkman and others 2010; Nicholls and Uitermark 2016). Consequently, it has one of the most well-developed immigrant social movement networks in the country. Los Angeles is also representative of similar activist clusters in cities around the United States including Chicago, San Francisco, Baltimore-Washington D.C., and New York (Zepeda Millán 2017; Bloemraad and Voss 2019; Nicholls 2019). Thus, Los Angeles is a strategic case to assess the stickiness of place and eventual scale shift.

The study focuses on the most prominent immigrant rights organization in the city: Center for Humane Immigrant Rights of Los Angeles (CHIRLA). Case selection was guided by a review of the rich literature on the immigrant rights movement in Southern California.

Preliminary research revealed the key role played by CHIRLA in local movement development during the 1990s and 2000s. However, it also showed the peculiar trajectory undertaken by the organization in the late 2000s and 2010s, during which CHIRLA effectively scaled up its activities, goals, and organization. In order to identify factors and conditions underpinning CHIRLA's evolution,

we conducted an organizational analysis along three key dimensions: organizational goals and activities; organizational networks and relations; and organizational resources (looking at both finances and human resources).

To collect this data, we relied on four source types: extensive archive material produced CHIRLA and affiliated organizations—such as the Instituto de Educación Popular del Sur de California (IDEPSCA)—CHIRLA's IRS 990 U.S. Federal Tax Return Forms (1990s–2013), and existing literature on the Los Angeles immigrant rights movement. The bulk of the archive material consists of grant applications, correspondence, reports, and other documents that CHIRLA and other immigrant right organizations supplied to the Liberty Hill Foundation, a Los Angeles-based philanthropy, and other local and national foundations when applying for funding (1990s–2014). At different times, the authors also conducted 40 interviews with key informants, all of whom were (or still are) involved with CHIRLA. Those data sources allowed us to gain a solid understanding of CHIRLA's organizational trajectory, its activities and goals, its interorganizational relations, as well as organizational resources (both financial and labor ones).

Combining those analytical approaches and data sources proved fruitful, but we recognize two potential limitations of our approach. In relying on organizational documents produced for very specific purposes (to obtain foundation grants, for example), we acknowledge that those sources may not always adequately portray organizational life. In relying on interviews, memories of past events can be distorted by bias and memory loss. We compensate for these shortcomings by triangulating across our different sources of data.

Organizing at the Local Scale: Strategy and Limited Resources

During the 1980s, the City of Los Angeles became a major destination for left-wing refugees from Central America, South Korea, and the Philippines. Newly settled activists initiated campaigns against authoritarian regimes in their countries of origin (Hamilton and Chinchilla 2001). They also began to fight for the rights of immigrant workers in the United States. Radical refugees in Los Angeles tapped into a preexisting social movement infrastructure and developed ties to labor organizers seeking to recruit low-income immigrants.

In this context, the Center for Humane Immigrant Rights of Los Angeles (CHIRLA) was established in 1986 as a coalition of advocacy organizations, religious groups, and a handful of progressive labor unions. CHIRLA was established with a grant from the Ford Foundation. While CHIRLA's work as a staffed coalition mainly centered on service coordination and legal referrals, a turning point was the decision to become an independent nonprofit organization in 1993 (Patler 2010). The organization's core work, already channeled in the direction of workers' rights and legalization for undocumented immigrants, focused on organizing economic sectors such as day labor and domestic work.

CHIRLA's organizing strategy aimed to raise political consciousness of immigrant workers, focusing mostly on day laborers. Pablo Alvarado and Marlom Portillo, two of CHIRLA's leading organizers, were members of the popular education organization, Institute of Popular Education of Southern California (IDEPSCA). They believed that organizing was an educational process and drew heavily from the work of Brazilian pedagogue Paulo Freire and his "pedagogy of the oppressed." This method stressed that organizers needed to draw upon the experiences of their "oppressed" students to raise their political consciousness. Popular education used the concrete issues encountered in workers' daily lives (e.g., wage theft, low wages, overtime, humiliation, threat of deportation, and so on) to elucidate the broader forces (e.g. capitalism, racism, imperialism, and so on) responsible for their common oppression.

CHIRLA was concerned with federal immigration policy, but it privileged the local scale for strategic and financial reasons. The organization's primary focus was expanding the rights of immigrant workers through local workplace battles. Winning campaigns against exploitative and repressive employers would, organizers believed, result in favorable employment practices and legal decisions. In addition to strategic reasons, financial scarcity made it difficult for CHIRLA to build up a social movement at the national scale. CHIRLA's revenue at its founding in 1993 was $295,000, far short of the amount needed to build a countrywide social movement network and create a sustained political presence in Washington D.C. Thus, the strategic preference for grassroots organizing combined with the dearth of financial resources to prioritize local campaigns for the rights of immigrants.

Geographical Path Dependency and Scalar Lock-In

Strategic preference and limited financial resources directed CHIRLA to the local scale, but relational interdependencies and resource dependency anchored the organization to this scale.

BUILDING STRONG TIES TO IMMIGRANT RECRUITS AND LOCAL ALLIES

From the early 1990s onwards, CHIRLA had committed itself to a strategy of organizing immigrant day laborers. Organizers invested heavily in building strong ties between day laborers in concrete places. CHIRLA organizers stressed the importance of community building to overcome group fragmentation. In addition to organizing regular meetings for the leadership team, they organized workshops among the workers of different day labor hiring sites (Inter-Esquinales). Regular meetings were complemented by social and cultural activities such as political theater, a musical group, collective meals, and parties. CHIRLA organizers introduced a soccer league and a Day Laborer World Cup. These activities were designed to break down the geographic, social, and cultural barriers dividing day laborers by building feelings of solidarity.

CHIRLA instituted democratic methods of self-organization at the hiring sites. Active workers formed executive committees in which they proposed common rules for behavior at hiring sites and for minimum wages, set priorities, and developed mobilization strategies.

Recommendations by the executive committee would then be discussed and voted on by all workers in frequent assembly meetings. CHIRLA's lead day-laborer organizer, Pablo Alvarado, remarked to a journalist that "there is an executive committee that deals with the issues here [on the corners and hiring sites]. The guys have organized a soccer team and a musical band. And the guys write their own corridos [folk songs]." These methods were crucial to encouraging workers to view their work as a collective rather than an individual affair. Strong ties with new recruits helped elevate the leadership capacities of many immigrant workers and forged strong bonds.

This support was important because it could be used to mobilize large numbers of immigrant workers to various events like public protests, city council meetings, and community cleanups.

CHIRLA also built strong relations with other Los Angeles–based organizations working on immigration and social justice issues. Allied legal organizations such as the Mexican American Legal and Educational Defense Fund (MALDEF), the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), and Legal Aid played early, decisive roles in defending day laborers. CHIRLA's staff also had strong relationships with other Los Angeles–based organizations such as Koreatown Immigrant Workers Alliance (KIWA), Central American Resource Center (CARECEN), IDEPSCA, and El Rescate. It also worked with these and some other organizations to pursue their work with day laborers. According to Pablo Alvarado, "The Day Laborer Organizing Project has developed multiethnic alliances […] CHIRLA organized an emergency coalition of day laborers and such community allies as the American Civil Liberties Union, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, and the Multi-Cultural Collaborative."

CHIRLA assumed leadership in creating a grassroots immigrant rights coalition. In one document, the organization recounted, "The Immigrant Campaign for Civil Rights will develop grassroots leadership in the Latino immigrant community … and, through CHIRLA's coalition, join with other people from other communities to fight racist and divisive public policy with a strong united front." Liberty Hill grants manager, Margarita Ramirez, added, "I'm talking about people who were engaged in actual work, who connected, and who actually collaborated with other organizations for very specific needs. You had IDEPSCA, CHIRLA, and KIWA working with each other around particular immigrant issues" (Margarita Ramirez, personal interview). The culmination of its role as a regional player was in the creation of the Multi-Ethnic Immigrant Worker Organizing Network (MIWON) in 2000. MIWON was a coalition of five prominent Los Angeles organizations including CHIRLA, KIWA, IDEPSCA,

the Pilipino Workers Center (PWC), and the Garment Workers Center. While these organizations played important roles in making up this coalition, CHIRLA assumed the leading role. It was established with the twofold aim of strengthening immigrant-worker organizing and engaging in broader immigrant rights advocacy at local, state, and national scales.

Thus, CHIRLA derived important advantages from its strong relations with recruits and allied organizations. The organization could organize corners and pressure city officials to pass supportive policies because it had a dedicated base among immigrant workers. Its mobilization capacities were magnified by its alliance to other immigrant organizations and progressive labor unions. And, its strong ties to legal advocacy organizations like MALDEF and the ACLU allowed it to mount legal challenges to restrictive immigration policies enacted by cities throughout California.

FINANCIAL CONSTRAINTS BINDING CHIRLA TO LOS ANGELES

Local philanthropies provided CHIRLA with essential financial support at the outset. The City of Los Angeles only started to provide serious funding in 1996, ten years after the organizations founding. Funders paid the organization to perform local functions and services, binding it to the local scale.

CHIRLA's financial resources were meager in its early years. It relied on a handful of funders, including the United Way, Liberty Hill, and California Wellness Foundation, among others. While it had sufficient funding to staff the organization and launch its local organizing campaign, its restricted resources limited the number of personnel needed to staff its more ambitious campaigns. To expand its funding base, the organization hoped to increase its dues-paying members. However, CHIRLA's constituency was mainly composed of undocumented immigrants employed in lowest wage sectors. The organization's constituents lacked the disposable income for membership.

The City of Los Angeles provided some relief from financial penury in 1996. In 1988, the Los Angeles City Council considered adopting an ordinance to banish the public solicitation of work. CHIRLA fought against the proposed ordinance and demanded the city open a series of worker centers. By the mid-1990s, city officials grew tired of managing the centers directly and called on local organizations to manage them. CHIRLA won the contract, which contributed to a significant increase in yearly revenue from $442,000 in 1995 to $1,285,557 in 1996. The new flow of financial resources allowed CHIRLA to hire staff from immigrant communities to expand its organizing efforts (Patler 2010).

In sum, during the 1990s, CHIRLA became firmly grounded in the local scale through relational and financial dependencies. Its strong ties to immigrant communities and allied organizations allowed to mobilize people for its different campaigns and leverage lawsuits against hostile politicians. Additionally, the infusion of money in the latter part of the 1990s provided the financial means

to contemplate a national campaign, but that money was tied to managing local day-labor centers. Thus, relational interdependencies and financial constraints locked the organization to the local scale.

Federal Threat

From the mid-1990s onwards, the federal government posed increased threats to the rights of immigrants, but the collective power of immigrant rights activism was locked into the local scale.

In 1996, the Clinton administration supported three decisive laws that would change immigration politics for years to come. The Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act (IIRIRA) allocated more resources to enforcement, expedited deportation procedures, restricted judicial discretion during removal proceedings, and reduced possibilities for appeals, among other changes (De Genova 2004; Coutin 2007; Varsanyi 2008). During the same year, Congress passed the Antiterrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act (AEDP). IIRIRA and AEDP expanded the offenses that could be considered "aggravated offense" for immigrants even when they weren't necessarily felonies. The Clinton administration and the Republican Congress also supported measures to restrict social benefits to immigrants. The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) established new restrictions on the receipt of welfare benefits. Immigrants were deemed ineligible for many welfare programs. The law also placed new restrictions on Supplemental Security Income (SSI), food stamps, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), and nonemergency Medicaid. It made undocumented immigrants ineligible for state and local services unless a state passed a law "positively affirming its commitment to provide public services to this population" (Varsanyi 2008, 289). The three laws therefore contributed to an expansion of powers of the federal government.

CHIRLA's responses were largely regional. In response to the restrictions of PRWORA, CHIRLA developed alliances with other regional organizations battling welfare reform (March 9th Coalition). Other coalitions such as the California Immigrant Welfare Collaborative lobbied the state. One action planned in 1998 was Immigration Day, which involved a large mobilization of immigrants in California's capital. A California Immigrant Welfare Collaborative grant application, contained in CHIRLA's archives, stated that "We would like to enable a large delegation of low-income Los Angeles area residents to be in Sacramento for a rally and to visit their State assembly members and senators" (California Immigrant Welfare Collaborative 1997). CHIRLA did not ignore the threat posed by restrictive federal policies.

However, its capacities to launch a national campaign were restricted by past investments in local alliances and the need to fulfill its obligations to local funders, allies, and immigrant worker activists.

Scale Shift: Crisis and Relational Opportunities

The organization finally began to shift scale in the mid-2000s. A financial crisis helped unleash the organization from its local obligations and a national organization (Center for Community Change) helped to broker relations between CHIRLA, other national organizations, and national philanthropies. Crisis, therefore, loosened local constraints, and relations to national organizations made the actual shift possible.

CHIRLA experienced increased financial precarity in the early 2000s. The success of the organizational model prompted other organizations to adopt the same model and strategy (Gnes 2016). More organizations entered the local field, but the number of philanthropic foundations and public funders remained the same. As CHIRLA faced greater competition for scarce financial resources, in 2003 and 2004 the City of Los Angeles cut its subsidy to CHIRLA. City officials no longer found its day labor services useful (Patler 2010). Revenue declined dramatically from $2,024,421 in 2002, to $1,557,361 in 2003 and $966,988 in 2004. By 2004, CHIRLA's expenses exceeded its revenue by $20,000, making it difficult to perform basic functions like pay staff and sustain operations. This crisis compelled the organization to reassess its localist strategy.

Crisis loosened the local scale's grip on CHIRLA, but relations with several national organizations provided the opportunity to shift to the national scale. In 1997, CHIRLA and other local immigrant organizations from around the country were invited by a prominent national organization, Center for Community Change (CCC), to participate in a campaign against a recently passed welfare reform law (PRWORA). The name of the coalition was National Campaign for Jobs and Income Support (NCJIS). The local immigrant rights organizations were expected to mobilize their constituents against measures to cut benefits to immigrants (documented and undocumented). CHIRLA issued a press release that stated the coalition was "a nationwide effort … by local and national organizations calling for the restoration of benefits to some of society's most vulnerable members" (CHIRLA 1997b). Within the coalition, the local immigrant rights organizations formed the Immigrant Organizing Committee. This was the first network to formally connect organizations in Los Angeles, Chicago, Baltimore, and other cities.

Relations to CCC and the burgeoning national coalition opened a new path to CHIRLA as a financial crisis placed increased stress on local activism. In 2003, a year of peak crisis for the organization, CHIRLA and the other immigrant organizations requested that CCC support a national campaign for immigrant rights. The executive director of CCC recounted:

> We were propositioning them to be part of the economic justice networks. They propositioned CCC to say, 'Hey, no one wants to talk about legalization of the undocumented in Washington, D.C. We need a national organization to take up this cause and back us up, bring us together, to support us.' It was a big issue for the organizations, not one that CCC

> had worked on previously. Really, it was kind of them coming to us and saying we need what CCC can bring. We eventually said yes (Bhargava, Center for Community Change, personal interview).

CCC eventually took on a leading role in the national fight for immigrant rights, and local organizations like CHIRLA played an important supportive role.

CCC and other national organization—especially, National Immigration Forum and America's Voice—brokered relations between local immigrant organizations like CHIRLA and national philanthropic foundations like Ford Foundation and Open Society. One CCC organizer noted that her organization channeled resources that it had raised to local immigrant rights organizations. "We made a commitment that more than half of all the money that the Center might raise to work on these efforts would go back into the field" (Mary Ochs, Center for Community Change, personal interview). Another former CCC organizer remembered that "[CCC] had the contacts and the ability to funnel money into the local organizations by getting the national foundations' attention" (Lupe Lopez, Center for Community Change, personal interview).

CCC worked with its national partners to convince large philanthropic foundations to create a specific foundation for its allied local immigrant rights organizations. In 2003, large foundations created the Four Freedom Foundation, which served as a vehicle to re-grant funds to local immigrant rights organizations. A former CCC organizer noted that "there were conversations with Open Society, Carnegie Foundation, and others to begin to raise resources for immigration reform, and the creation of what eventually became the Four Freedoms Fund, which was a fund or an affinity group focused on immigrants' rights, immigration reform issues" (Rick, Center for Community Change, personal interview). The Four Freedoms Fund was one vehicle among others to channel money to local and regional immigrant rights organizations. An Open Society Institute document reported that "OSI funds through the Center for Community Change, the National Council of La Raza, and Four Freedoms Fund will support the major immigrant statewide organizations [for example, CHIRLA]" (Open Society Institute 2009).

These new resources did not allow CHIRLA to build its own national social movement infrastructure; organizations like CCC and National Immigration Forum would do this. However, the new resources did allow CHIRLA to invest more time and energy in nationwide political campaigns. It assumed an active role in a nationwide social movement infrastructure that mobilized under the banners of the Coalition for Comprehensive Immigration Reform (2006-2007), Reform Immigration for America (2009-2010), and Alliance for Citizenship (2013-2014). It developed strong ties to a wide variety of organizations around the country and prioritized lobbying the federal government for immigration reform. It had, in other words, undertaken a process of national scale shift.

Thus, a major financial crisis loosened the local scale's grip on CHIRLA, and relations with national organizations provided the organization a path into national politics. The importance of those two elements combined—a disruptive factor (crisis) and an enabling factor (multiscalar networks)—made it possible for CHIRLA to fully integrate into a national social movement.

Conclusions

The case of CHIRLA helps provide insights into the factors blocking and permitting scale shift. First, in its early phase, CHIRLA began with limited financial resources. It went on to develop an organizational model combining grassroots organizing and local advocacy that relied on strong partnerships with other progressive organizations. CHIRLA depended on these local relations because they allowed it to achieve much more than it could have alone. Moreover, funding from private foundations and the local government further locked the organization into a path of local politics. Even when threats from federal government mounted, CHIRLA was bound by relations and benefactors to stay local. The important advantages of local politicking were therefore offset by constraints on the organization's geographic flexibility. Second, the organization entered a period of crisis following the crowding of the local organizational field and the loss of municipal contracts to manage day-labor centers. Those developments prompted the organization to break out of its geographic path dependence and scale up its activities. Preexisting national relations, which CHIRLA had begun to develop during the late 1990s, provided the organization with the opportunity to go national and eventually restructure itself as an advocacy organization targeting federal immigration policy. This paper, therefore, alerts us to the geographic path dependencies that prevent scale shift and the conditions (crisis and relations) that make such a shift possible.

The process of scale shift has important implications for organizational change and strategy. For CHIRLA, going national meant abandoning a hybrid organizational model, where advocacy and lobbying activities were integral part of a holistic approach including "community building" and organizing, service provision, and awareness raising. This model was abandoned in favor of a more structured and professionalized "lobbying" model. Such transformation also required the organization to change the composition of its staff. It led to the hiring of more experienced and highly qualified policy advisors and legal specialists, familiar with the intricacies of the federal legislative and policy processes, and to the downsizing of organizing staff and activities. CHIRLA's own organizational structure changed when it created the CHIRLA Action Fund; a 501(c)(4) branch allowed it to formally lobby at the federal level. Zald and Ash (1966) famously alerted us to the complex transformative process of social movement organizations as they navigate and weigh the trade-offs that come with this form of institutionalization and professionalization. Similarly, we argue that more research is needed to better understand the impact of scale shift on the

actual structure, mission, and objectives of organizations, and on how that affects the organization's effectiveness or legitimacy towards constituents and members.

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