

Intersectional Organization: 2006 Immigrant Rights Protests and  
Changes in Identity Politics in Labor Movements

By

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## INTRODUCTION

In the Spring of 2006, millions of people marched to protest against H.R.4437, a proposed law that raised penalties for undocumented immigrants and criminalized people who helped them to enter or remain in the United States. This was one of the largest protests in history as it was bigger than any other historically notable protest such as the 1963 March on Washington (250,000 people), protests against the Vietnam War (250,000 and 320,000 people), and the Chicago Haymarket protest of 1886 (300,000-500,000 people) (Bloemraad et al. 2011). Because of the sheer size of the protests and because they were a significant turning point for many immigrant communities and immigrant workers in which their political influence was notably high and critical, the 2006 protests are a worthwhile case study that provides key insight into identity-based strategic actions taken by labor movements.

On the surface, H.R.4437 targeted undocumented immigrants but it was undeniable that undocumented immigrant *workers* were the targeted group that the legislation sought to remove from the U.S. This is evidenced by the significant role in protest organization that the Service Employees International Union and the AFL-CIO played as well as the people who protested. Immigrant workers quit their labor-intensive work for one day on the May 1, 2006 (titled “A day without immigrants”) to affirm the significance of immigrant labor in the U.S. society. These events evidence that the 2006 protests highlighted worker identities as members of immigrant ethnic groups.

The aim of this paper is to investigate whether intersectional organization helps labor movements to achieve their goal. Here, by intersectional organization, I refer to the organizing of protests that embodies intersectional identities – that is fusing of identities. The organization of the 2006 protests are intersectional not only because it contains a number of social and economic

identities such as worker, Hispanic, and immigrant identities but also because unions participated in the organization of a labor movement that was largely concerned with Hispanic and immigrant workers' rights.

More specifically, this paper investigates the importance of unions in the organization of the 2006 protests and emphasizes the importance of intersectional organization within labor movements in the service economy characterized by high employment, immigration, and income-inequality. Bloemraad et al. (2011) write that diversity can impede political action. This is because once a common social and political characteristic is identified and emphasized, it is much easier to mobilize for a single cause. This has been very much the case in many historical labor movements in which unions only addressed worker identities and thus, they were focusing on single identity politics. However, neoliberal identity politics have gradually moved away from worker identities and focused more on social identities. Following from these pre-existing discourses, the 2006 protests are historically salient because they show that the intersections of both social and worker identities are essential in labor movement organization. This paper argues that labor movements can greatly benefit from intersectional organization.

I examine inter-city variations in protest volume and size in order to discern the impact of urban contexts that vary in terms of their intersectional labor organization. Data on the protests are from Bada et al. (2011) and the Immigrant Worker Freedom Ride (IWFR) website; data on urban contexts are from the 2005 IPUMS-CPS. I aggregate these data into Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs). Overall, the findings on the impact of urban contexts indicate that unions were central in the organization of the 2006 protests. This can be interpreted as unions stepping into intersectional organization and moving away from discourses that focuses on either social identities or worker identities. The 2006 protests show that unions were not solely concerned with

workers' rights but with Hispanic and immigrant workers' rights. In this sense, the protests conveyed unions' intersectional organization in which various social and worker identities were delivered during the organization of the protests. I, therefore, conclude that labor movements should merge social identities with worker identities in order to specifically target distinct group grievances among workers.

This paper makes two main contributions to the literature. First, this paper quantitatively analyzes the importance of intersectional organization of labor movements. A number of literatures emphasize the importance of intersectional identity politics within labor movements, but they do not highlight intersectional organization and its impact using quantitative methods. Therefore, this paper suggests the importance of intersectional organization using a unique empirical case and social and economic conditions at a specific time in history. In addition, by focusing on intersectional organization of labor movements, this paper proposes new strategic methods that labor unions should adopt in the era of intersectionality.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### Changing Identity Politics

The concept *identity* is widely used in sociology and social psychology literature. In defining the concept, many scholars emphasize the importance of social and political characteristics that a society embodies and how identities are shaped through these characteristics. Stryker (2000) defines identity as “ideas, beliefs, and practices of a society” (2000:22) and its features are ascribed to all members of that society. Tajfel (1982), however, defines the term social identity as self-concept that derives from being a member of a social group and emotional attachments to that membership. Stuart Hall (1996), a world-renowned British cultural sociologist,

emphasizes the importance of location in regards to identity and he stresses that identities are constituted within, not outside representation. Stets and Serpe (2013) claim that identity is a shared set of meanings that define individuals' roles in society and their membership in social groups. They stress that individuals tend to have more than one identity and that the kinds of identities that they embody tend to be different (Burke and Stets 2009). Following these scholars, identity is defined as how we have been represented and how that bears on how we might represent ourselves, not who we are and where we come from. It is evident that identities are defined as a self-conception that is at least influenced, if not shaped, by external conditions which is distinguished based on one's location.

Identities play an integral part in social movement theories. This is because a collective identity can lead to a stronger unity, solidarity, and empathy within a social movement (Bleomraad et al. 2011). Moreover, some scholars claim that even new members are recruited using pre-existing network ties which is based on shared identities (Stryker 2000). Taylor and Whittier's (1992) definition of collective identity denotes the importance of shared identities in social movements. They define collective identity as "the shared definition of a group that derives from members' common interests, experiences, and solidarity" (1992:105). In this sense, identity construction is an integral process in any social movements as it plays a fundamental role in shaping movements' strategies, and tactics, goals, and outcomes. Additionally, as Hunt and Benford write (2004), commitment can be interpreted as an individual's identification with a collectivity that leads to instrumental, emotional, and moral attachments. Solidarity, as a concept, similarly emphasizes the importance of how an individual identify with a collectivity and dedicate to their common cause. In this sense, collective identity can be seen as the glue that ties solidarity

and commitment together and provides essential qualities that a movement requires from its members.

Identities and self-conception have been salient in labor movements. After all, Marx (1992) argued that a revolution would only occur after the participants realized the realities of exploitation and alienation and embrace worker identity. In this sense, labor movements have been inclusive of people who were aware of their worker identities and aimed to tackle the possible social and economic injustices that come with these self-identifications. A number of different types of identity politics have been discussed in the labor movements literature.

Single identity politics refer to a labor movement embedding only one social, economic, or political identity. In many labor movements, the one identity that was stressed throughout was a collective worker/class identity. Many labor organization leaders saw the union membership of black workers as a further extension of a class problem and urged all workers to form a strong solidarity together. This is reflected in the Communist slogan of the 1930s: “Negro and White: Unite and Fight” (Lichtenstein 2002). Similarly, the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) sought to create a union for all workers regardless of race, sex, ethnicity, or citizenship and accepted members from all over the world (Lazo 1995). These earlier movements that focused solely on class identities reflects Marx’s understandings of class consciousness and class oppression. Political scientist and race theorist Adolph Reed equates race politics and class politics. He writes, “race politics is not an alternative to class politics; it is class politics... This perspective may help explain why, the more aggressively and openly capitalist class power destroys and marketizes every shred of social protection working people of all races, gender, and sexual orientations” (Reed 2015:1).

These strong focuses on class identities are heavily criticized by a number of scholars because of class identities' inability to capture the different forms of oppression that are experienced based on race and ethnicity, gender, and sexual orientations. For example, it became evident during the 1960s in the U.S., that African American workers were disproportionately assigned dirty and difficult tasks, and the work of white women was just as segregated and devalued (Lichenstein 2002; Stainback and Thomaskovic-Devey 2012).

The heavy focus that Marxist theorists weigh on class politics is also criticized by neoliberal identity politics which are largely characterized by their emphasis on social identities and avoidance of class identity politics. Neoliberal identity politics, which focus on endless variations of individual characteristics, base their discourse on meritocracy (Nicoll 2004). Therefore, class identities become obsolete because everyone, with sufficient dedication, passion, and hard work can succeed despite their class backgrounds. However, neoliberal identity politics acknowledges social groupings and identities that can bring about potential discriminations of certain racial/ethnic and gender groups.

I argue in this paper that focusing solely on class identities or emphasizing social identities at the expense of class identities is not ideal. Joan Acker (2006) stresses the need to incorporate intersectionality within work organization studies because focusing on one identity can oversimplify other social conditions and realities that are significant. Intersectionality within labor organization is important because identities are not formed solely by class or other social and demographic characteristics but how identities shape an individual over a course of time in a specific social and political structure.

This understanding of individual identity derives from Bourdieu's concept "habitus" which is defined as embodied dispositions and incorporates economic and political backgrounds such as



social class, race and ethnicity, nationality, and religion (Bourdieu 1977). In other words, individuals' perceptions of the world and their actions embody their lived experiences which are determined by their social status, possessions of capitals, and social and political groups. In this sense, both Marxist understandings of class identities and neoliberal identity politics, do not provide a holistic picture of identities. Instead, understanding the intersections of class and social identities is paramount.

In fact, there were a number of labor organizations that reflected intersectionality – fusing of identities (Cornfield 1989). Identity politics within labor movements addressed issues of what it meant to be a black worker, or a female worker, or a black female worker. For example, Local 1199's organization of hospital workers that addressed issues of labor, race, and gender is a good historical example of intersectional identity politics (Donovan 1989; Lerner 1991). Kurtz (2002) discusses the intersections between race and worker identity in labor movements in the early 1970s. Gender also played an integral part in forming intersectional identity politics within labor movements as African American women joined the black organizations in the 1970s. Rosenfeld (2014) notes that a quarter of black women in the private sector joined labor unions by the 1970s which is particularly impressive because of the double disadvantage that they faced. Lazo (1995) argues that, although some discrimination and exclusionary practices still exist, many organizations are trying to be more inclusive of these different identities. For example, there have been encouraging developments within the AFL-CIO, SEIU, and UNITE where constituency groups have been created for ethnic minority workers (Hunt and Rayside 2000). This diversification displays the significance of intersectionality identity politics that are now widely spread within labor unions.

A relatively new concept is emerging in the discourse of identity politics: situated intersectionality. Yuval-Davis (2017) define situated intersectionality as intersectionality that highlights translocality, (the meanings of social divisions and their power relations) translocality (social divisions and power relations in space such as households, neighborhoods, cities, and states), and transtemporality (the historical changes of the meanings and power and changes in a person's life cycle). I find this concept particularly pertinent to this paper because the social divisions and power relations that are attributed to a minority group in a given space at a certain point in history will affect one's intersectional identity, even if that individual does not embody an identity of that minority group. In other words, situated intersectionality is not just about being a minority and possessing the identity of that minority group but instead, it is about the social construction of power relations and how one is situated within these structures. In this sense, situated intersectionality does not just apply to ethnic minority workers and female workers, but white male workers who have been dominating and leading many historical labor movements.

The concept situated intersectionality is not yet used widely in the study of labor movements because it is a relatively new concept developed in boundary studies and cultural sociology. However, I believe this concept is pertinent in understanding the findings of this paper because it emphasizes space, time, social groups, and identities.

### 2006 Immigrant Rights Protests

The 2006 protests were historic in scope and scale. In the spring of 2006, from mid-February to early May, 3.7 to 5 million people protested in 160 cities. This shockingly large number of protestors were addressing the social and political problems proposed by H.R.4437, also known as Border Protection, Antiterrorism and Illegal Immigration Control Act.

H.R.4437 criminalized and stigmatized undocumented migrant workers as well as anyone who helped and employed them. The Act required all undocumented immigrants to pay a fine of \$3,000 before their deportation and set the minimum sentence for fraudulent documents at 10 years. This Act was considered to be extremely problematic because instead of penalizing corporations and institutions that employed undocumented migrants, it attacked individuals with little to no power. It created human rights issues regarding undocumented workers who had no clear legal status in the U.S. Because of the lack of formal membership, undocumented workers were jailed, arrested, removed, and deported and the bill not only legitimized these practices but stigmatized the workers (Getrich 2008). The bill passed the U.S. House of Representatives but did not pass the Senate which indicates the success of the 2006 protests. The bill passed the U.S. House of Representatives, but did not pass the Senate. The bill's failure can be attributed to the success of the 2006 protests.

Some literatures on the 2006 protests emphasize their ethnic collective identity because the number of Hispanics that participated in the protests was exceptionally high (Bloemraad et al. 2011; Mohamed 2012; Pineda and Sowards 2007; Ramírez 2011). I perceive this movement as a labor movement: Although the protests had addressed racial and ethnic discriminatory proposed in the bill, the protests were characterized by a high number of Hispanic workers. The criticality of labor is evident in "A day without immigrants" where immigrants quit their labor-intensive jobs for a day on May 1, 2006 in order to draw the attention towards the significance and contribution of immigrant workers in the U.S. economy (Hing and Johnson 2006). Moreover, local and national unions such as the SEIU and the AFL-CIO participated in the organization of the protests (Pantoja et al. 2008) which indicates the symbolic significance that the 2006 protests had on many immigrant workers and labor organizations.

In addition, many literatures claim that there is a direct relationship between the 2003 Immigrant Worker Freedom Ride (IWFR) and the 2006 protests. The IWFR, which was organized by a number of labor organizations such as the AFL-CIO, SEIU, and UNITE HERE aimed to raise awareness of the precarious conditions that many migrant workers were exposed to and addressed issues of job insecurities and instabilities (Barreto et al. 2009; Lum 2008). They were also partly addressing anti-immigrant attitudes that emerged after the September 11 attacks (Kreychman and Volik 2006). The IWFR was modelled after the Freedom Rides of the Civil Rights Movement. They had buses stopping in different cities to foster networks among immigrant workers, union members, and other immigrant rights organizations. Bloemraad et al. (2011) argues that cities that participated in the IWFR also were involved in the 2006 protests. This indicates that the 2006 protests exhibited a strong worker identity among its participants.

The significance of worker identity within the 2006 protests does not mean there were no other forms of social identities present. Ethnic identities were a salient factor not only because of the high number of Hispanic participants but also because the Spanish speaking media played an integral role in mobilizing the Hispanic population in the U.S. (Bloemraad et al. 2011; Pineda and Sowards 2007; Ramírez 2011; Selee 2006). Ramírez (2011) argues that using Spanish-language radio provided a political opening for Hispanics because it gave them access to their ethnic communities – reveal[ing] a growing capacity to mobilize Latinos by appealing to and activating a common ethnic identity in response to external shocks or urgent needs of the community” (2011:64).

In addition, although it is less explicitly discussed in the existing literature, most scholars agree that immigrant identity is pertinent to the 2006 protests (Bada et al. 2006; Bloemraad et al. 2011; Getrich 2008; Selee 2006). Because H.R.4437 directly targeted immigrant communities,

even the documented workers felt threatened. Many immigrant communities perceived H.R.4437 as the culmination of continued discriminations and feared what other legislation and policies would further worsen their social positions in the future (Pantoja et al. 2008). In this sense, the 2006 protests exhibit more than one social and political identity.

Many of the literatures emphasized the importance of resource mobilization theory in understanding the 2006 protests. They were shaped and organized by local communities including religious, labor, and community based immigrant rights organizations such as Catholic churches, labor unions, as well as Hometown Associations (HTAs) (Barreto et al. 2009; Bloemraad et al. 2011; Heredia 2011; Martinez 2011). These organizational communities provided a physical space where migrants and protest participants could get together to discuss issues and inform other community members about H.R.4437 (Martinez 2011).

#### Field and the Socio-Economic Characteristics of 2006

In this paper, the intersection of space and time is highlighted throughout. The social and economic conditions that are specific to a given space at a certain point in history must intertwine to function as a catalyst in order for a movement to occur. Cornfield (2014) highlights the importance of “historical and macroeconomic timing” in understanding immigration labor movements. By chronologically examining time through people, events, and processes, Cornfield stresses the importance of temporality. Moreover, social and political conditions are often confined to a given space – city, region, states, and nations – and this is because the legal and political positions of these spaces are different (Cornfield 2007).

These definitions of space and time converge together in Bourdieu’s concept, “field” which can be defined as space where agents and their social positions are located and it is shaped by

agents' possessions of capitals and habitus, and social structures such as power and class relations (Bourdieu 2005; Bourdieu and Johnson 1993). Field emphasizes the importance of structures that shapes agents' habitus and consequently, their behaviors. It is important to note that field embodies the notion of time. Bourdieu discusses the importance of temporal dynamics such as social aging and the order of succession through which field are reproduced (Bourdieu 1988; 1996; Liu and Emirbayer 2016). Therefore, I argue, the field that embeds individuals' habitus is not solely formed by class identities or social identities, but instead is an intersection of all economic, political, and social identities. Individuals' identities cannot only be examined using single identity politics or neoliberal identity politics. Instead, we should incorporate intersectional identity politics and strive for intersectional organization of labor movements in order to make labor movements more successful.

It is crucial to understand spatiality and temporality in social movements because, for a movement to happen, the field that movement actors belong to must be prepared for such action. This paper specifically focuses on the urban contexts in 2006 in an era of the service economy characterized by high levels of employment, immigration, and income-inequality.

Cornfield writes, "in the U.S. service economy based in urban markets, these forces converge in cities that contextualize labor revitalization initiatives and labor inclusive coalition building" (2007: 235). Here, "these forces" refer to the forces such as globalization, immigration, identity politics, and union bureaucratization that challenge labor and attempt to incorporate different social groups and diverse individual backgrounds. These forces, as well as the labor market, have become city-specific in which some cities are exposed to a high number of immigrants that challenge existing identity politics (Singer 2004). With the growing service economy, urban contexts have become more important than ever before. Cornfield (2007) argues

the service economy often rests on co-extensive local urban labor and product markets, whereas global manufacturing industries utilize international labor forces for the cheapest manufacturing processes.

In the early 2000s, the largest Hispanic population was still located in the West (44.2%) of the U.S. and they were less likely to live in the Northeast (13.3%) and the Midwest (7.7%) (Ramirez and de la Cruz 2003). However, compared to the 1980s, the Hispanic population in the U.S. was becoming more geographically dispersed in the 2000s (Brown and Lopez 2013). This meant that grievances among immigrant workers were no longer specified to the West but instead, represented a nation-wide issue.

The employment rate in 2006 should also be taken into account. High employment rates meant more immigrants entered the U.S. in order to meet the demands of the labor market. Borbely's (2009) study on the U.S. labor market during the recession indicates that the unemployment rate decreased from 2003 and until 2007. The employment-population ratio also continued to increase from 2004 to 2007 and rapidly declined in 2008. Accordingly, the number of people who lost jobs also decline from 2004 to 2007 which, overall, represents high employment rates in the U.S. right before and during the 2006 protests. Not surprisingly, the Pew Research center notes that the U.S. received the most undocumented migrants in the years 2000 to 2005 since 1990 with approximately 4.4 million undocumented migrants entering the U.S. during those five years. This approximates to 850,000 undocumented migrants per year which is substantially larger compared to the 1980s at 180,000 undocumented migrants per year (Passel 2005). Passel and Suro (2005) also state that the number of undocumented workers increased towards the end of 1990s and continued to increase until 2005.

This period also is characterized by a high-income inequality, as noted by Cornfield (2006; 2014). According to Cornfield, the Gini coefficient, which indicates income inequality, has continuously increased from 1980 until 2004. This argument is supported by the report produced by Maloney and Schumer (2010) which states that the share of the richest 1 percent of households in the U.S. increased from 10.0 percent to 21.0 percent between 1980 to 2008. Income inequality provides context to the grievances that the workers may have felt. A high-income inequality suggests that the segregation of the labor market is more stringent than before. This creates the circumstance, leading up to the 2006 protests, in which unskilled immigrant workers become disgruntled and have little hope for social mobility.

A number of previous literatures examined the importance of race and ethnicity in discussing labor movements (Cornfield 1989; 1991; Isaac et al. 1980). I build on these studies by incorporating the language of intersectionality. In addition, I test whether intersectionality is still a relevant strategy for labor unions focusing on an era of the service economy characterized by high levels of employment, immigration, and income-inequality.

## **DESIGN OF THE STUDY**

### Hypotheses

This paper argues that the role of unions was particularly important because of worker-related issues that the protests addressed. This paper, hence, tests whether unions played an integral role in the organization of the 2006 protests. The IWFR – organized by a number of unions – helped to ignite nationwide interests in immigrant workers’ rights in 2003 and provided human and socio-organizational resources to cities where the buses were stopped (Bloemraad et al. 2011; Milkman 2011; Shaw 2011). Therefore, the involvement in the IWFR denotes the



resources that unions had left behind as well as union presence in those fields. In addition, this paper also tests the Marxist notion of worker identity politics to see if worker identity on its own is a salient factor. Following from this, the *first two sets of hypotheses* are:

Organizational resource hypotheses:

$H_1$ : Protest size is greater in MSAs where the IWFR were held, controlling for Hispanic and Immigrant population;

$H_2$ : Protest volume is greater in MSAs where the IWFR were held, controlling for Hispanic and Immigrant population;

Worker identity hypotheses:

$H_3$ : Protest size is greater in MSAs with a greater number of union member percentage, controlling for Hispanic and Immigrant population;

$H_4$ : Protest volume is greater in MSAs with a greater number of union member percentage, controlling for Hispanic and Immigrant population.

The organization of the 2006 protests are intersectional not only because it embedded a number of social and economic identities such as worker, Hispanic, and immigrant identities but also because unions participated in the organization of a labor movement that was largely concerned with Hispanic and immigrant workers' rights. The 2006 protests were dissimilar from many other historical labor movements in that unions did not solely emphasize a worker identity, but instead, they focused on intersectional worker identities among immigrant and Hispanic workers. Following from this, I propose *two additional sets of hypotheses*:

Intersectional organization hypotheses A:

$H_5$ : Protest size is greater in MSAs with high levels of union density and high percentages of population who are Hispanic, controlling for IWFR;

$H_6$ : Protest volume is greater in MSAs with high levels of union density and high percentages of population who are Hispanic, controlling for IWFR;

Intersectional organization hypotheses B:

$H_7$ : Protest size is greater in MSAs with high levels of union density and high percentage of population who are foreign born, controlling for IWFR;

$H_8$ : Protest volume is greater in MSAs with high levels of union density and high percentage of population who are foreign born, controlling for IWFR.

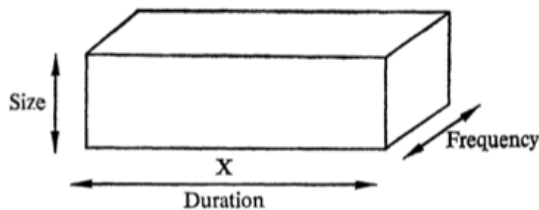
### Data and Methods

I use Bada et al.'s dataset, the IWFR website, and the 2005 IPUMS Current Population Survey (IPUMS-CPS). Bada et al.'s dataset was published in 2011 in the article *Invisible No More: Mexican Migrant Civic Participation in the United States*. They gathered data on the 2006 protests specifically using newspaper articles. This data includes information on 268 immigrant rights protests in 164 cities that happened in the spring of 2006. The information provided includes the date of event, estimated number of participants, and sources of the data indicating the newspaper from which it was drawn.

Because Bada et al.'s data is not comparable with the IPUMS-CPS data, I aggregated Bada et al. and the IWFR website data into metropolitan statistical areas (MSAs), using the 1990 Office of Management and Budget (OMB) delineations. There are more recent MSA delineations introduced by the OMB but the IPUMS-CPS data uses the 1990 delineations. There were 113 cities matched to an MSA based on the city name and the state. Thirty-four cities' counties were searched and were matched to an MSA's counties. Twelve cities were matched to an MSA according to their geographical proximity. If the driving distance to an MSA was within 2 hours, the city was

added onto an MSA. Most cities that were included according to their geographical proximity fell within 1 hour drive, with 2 exceptions: Storm Lake, IA which was added onto Omaha-Council Bluffs, NE/IA (2.5-hour drive) and Walla Walla, WA which was added onto Yakima, WA (2-hour drive). The logic here is that people would have travelled approximately 1-2 hours to join the protests. Six cities were dropped because their counties did not match any MSA counties and they were not geographically close to any MSAs either. These six cities posed a problem of comparability and they were not included in the final dataset. After aggregating cities into MSAs, the sample size was reduced from 164 to 108.

**Figure 1: The Volume of Protests**



Source: Shorter and Tilly (1971).

I have two dependent variables: (1) the size of protests in each MSA measured by the average number of participants and (2) the volume of protests in each MSA. The volume of protests was measured by using the method that Shorter and Tilly (1971) propose (see Figure 1). I multiply size, duration, and frequency of protests in each MSA to calculate the volume of the protests. Here, size refers to the number of participants, and in cases where there was more than one protest in a city, the means of the number of participants were used. For duration, if protests were held consecutively, they were considered as the same protest, whereas if protests were more than a day apart, they were considered as different protests. Distinguishing whether the protest is a

continuation of the previous day's protest or a new one is important in calculating the volume. If they were considered as the same protest, the duration would increase. However, for different protests, the frequency would increase. Shorter and Tilly (1971) suggest using the median for calculating the duration of protests to get rid of outliers. However, the 2006 protests did not have outliers regarding the duration of protests. The longest protests occurred for 5 days in Los Angeles and San Diego. Therefore, considering the distribution of the duration of the 2006 protests, the mean of duration would more accurately represent the volume of protests in each city.

I include two dependent variables in order to more accurately portray the overall intensity and magnitude of the protests in each city. Size of the protests alone would not have taken duration and frequency of protests into account. On the other hand, because many previous literatures focus on size of the protests only, it did not make sense to exclude size and focus solely on volume. Both dependent variables are log transformed to meet the assumptions of ordinary least squares. In order to interpret them, the coefficients must be multiplied by 100.

The IWFR website is no longer available. However, with a scanned version of the website, I counted the number of buses stopped in each city. A higher number of bus stops in a city indicates a greater involvement in the movement. This represents the intensity of the IWFR in each city. These numbers of stops were then aggregated to MSAs using the same method described above. Other independent variables, namely, Union Member (%), Income, Hispanic (%), and Foreign Born (%) come from the 2005 IPUMS-CPS. The 2005 IPUMS-CPS was used instead of 2006 because the protests occurred mostly in February – May of 2006. Because I wanted to focus on what spatial conditions existed before the protests occurred, not after, it made little sense to use 2006 data.

The Union Member variable measures how an MSA accommodates worker identities. The Hispanic variable refers to the ethnic composition of the Hispanic/Latino population in an MSA. The Foreign Born variable refers to the percentages of people in an MSA that are not born in the U.S., but it is possible that they may have acquired U.S. citizenship after having lived in the U.S. The Income variable refers to wages and salary income, not total household income.

It would have been ideal if this paper compared the roles of unions and other immigrant, social and religious organizations. A number of previous literatures hypothesize the importance of local churches, hometown associations (HTAs), and local immigrant rights organizations (Bloemraad et al. 2011; Heredia 2011; Pantoja et al. 2008; Shaw 2011). However, many of these organizations tend to be informal gatherings without a website or a telephone number. Therefore, there is very little data on them and it was not possible to incorporate them into the data analysis.

## **FINDINGS**

Each MSA is conceived as a field where pre-existing resources convene such as unions' organizational resources and large numbers of marginalized workers such as human resources. Table 1 shows the descriptive statistics of each variable used. Protest volume tend to have a higher mean and more dispersed data compared to protest size. This is because protest volumes, in many cases, are bigger numbers than protest size as protest volume is calculated by multiplying protest size, duration, and frequency. IWFR is a count variable and while many MSAs recorded 0 IWFR bus stops, some MSAs such as New York-Northern New Jersey, Long Island, NY-NJ-PA and Washington, DC/MD/VA recorded as high as 9 IWFR bus stops. Therefore, the mean is smaller than the standard deviation. The means of Hispanic and Foreign Born variables range between 11% - 18%. The PEW research center claims that approximately 12% of the U.S. population were

foreign born and 14% are Hispanic (Passel and Cohn 2008). This indicates that the protests were held in MSAs that had higher than national average foreign born population and Hispanic population. Additionally, the national average of union member percentage in 2005 was 12.5% (BLS 2005) which is higher than the composition of union members in MSAs that experienced the 2006 protests. The median wage and salary income reported in Table 1 is \$26,514.25. The median net wage income in 2005 in the U.S. was \$23,962.20 which is measured by Social Security Administration (SSA 2017). This is slightly lower than the MSAs that held the protests. From these descriptive statistics, we can make an assumption that human capital such as Hispanic population and immigrant population were important during the 2006 protests.

**Table 1. Descriptive Statistics for MSAs (n=109)**

| Variables                   | Mean     | SD       |
|-----------------------------|----------|----------|
| Protest Size                | 7278.59  | 11716.90 |
| Protest Volume              | 24864.00 | 61751.97 |
| IWFR                        | 0.62     | 1.28     |
| Union Member (%)            | 11.22    | 10.23    |
| Income                      | 26514.25 | 6055.59  |
| Hispanic Population (%)     | 18.36    | 20.17    |
| Foreign Born Population (%) | 13.40    | 10.35    |

Sources: Bada et al. (2011), IWFR website, IPUMS-CPS

Table 2 shows OLS regression results for protest size and volume in MSAs. Hispanic percentage and Foreign Born percentage variables could not be added onto the same model because of multicollinearity. The findings in Table 2 support the first hypothesis: Protest size is greater in MSAs where the IWFR were held, controlling for Hispanic and Immigrant population in MSAs. As an MSA experiences one IWFR, the number of participants of a protest increase by 29-32 people depending on which control variable was used. The protest volume also increases with an increase in IWFR. As an MSA experiences one IWFR, the protest volume increase by 40-45,

depending on which control variable was used. This finding supports the second hypothesis: Protest volume is greater in MSAs where the IWFR were held, controlling for Hispanic and Immigrant population in MSAs. This shows that the MSAs that previously experienced immigrant rights movement are more likely to host another immigrant rights movement in the future.

The findings in Table 2 demonstrate that the third and fourth hypotheses are not supported: Protest size is greater in MSAs with a greater number of union member percentage, controlling for Hispanic and Immigrant population in MSAs and Protest size is greater in MSAs with a greater number of union member percentage, controlling for Hispanic and Immigrant population in MSAs. Union member is not a statistically significant variable in predicting protest size and volume. In other words, union member percentage alone does not predict the size or volume of the 2006 protests.

Table 3 uses the same variables as Table 2 but introduces interaction terms to determine if there were Hispanic or immigrant population with stronger worker identities in MSAs. Again, Hispanic and Foreign Born percentage could not be added onto the same model because of multicollinearity. The fifth hypothesis, protest size is greater in MSAs with high levels of union density and high percentages of population who are Hispanic, controlling for IWFR, is supported by the findings. Model 1's findings indicates that as a unit of Hispanic union members increase in an MSA, the size of protest also increases by 0.2. In other words, Hispanic population percentage and union member percentage alone do not contribute to the size of the protests because the main effects are not statistically significant, but rather it is the intersection of Hispanic percentage and union member percentage that contribute to the size of the protest. Protest Volume presents the same trend. As a unit of Union Member\*Hispanic increases, protest volume increases by 0.2, controlling for IWFR. This finding supports the sixth hypothesis.

**Table 2. OLS Regression Results for Protest Size and Volume in MSAs (n=109)**

|                    | Protest Size                |                             |                             |                             | Protest Volume              |                             |                             |                             |
|--------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
|                    | Model 1<br><i>b</i><br>(se) | Model 2<br><i>b</i><br>(se) | Model 3<br><i>b</i><br>(se) | Model 4<br><i>b</i><br>(se) | Model 5<br><i>b</i><br>(se) | Model 6<br><i>b</i><br>(se) | Model 7<br><i>b</i><br>(se) | Model 8<br><i>b</i><br>(se) |
| IWFR               | 0.382 **<br>(0.120)         | 0.331 **<br>(0.120)         | 0.317 **<br>(0.118)         | 0.292 *<br>(0.118)          | 0.514 ***<br>(0.143)        | 0.479 **<br>(0.145)         | 0.446 **<br>(0.138)         | 0.399 **<br>(0.135)         |
| Union Member (%)   |                             | 0.015<br>(0.015)            | 0.013<br>(0.015)            | 0.011<br>(0.015)            |                             | 0.020<br>(0.018)            | 1.69E-02<br>(0.017)         | 1.19E-02<br>(0.017)         |
| Income             |                             | 5.60E-05<br>(2.56E-05)      | * 7.72E-05<br>(2.71E-05)    | ** 7.82E-05<br>(2.64E-05)   | **                          | 3.78E-05<br>(3.09E-05)      | 7.86E-05<br>(3.16E-05)      | * 8.06E-05<br>(3.02E-05)    |
| Hispanic (%)       |                             |                             | 1.69E-02 *<br>(7.92E-03)    |                             |                             |                             | 0.033 *<br>(0.009)          |                             |
| Foreign Born (%)   |                             |                             |                             | 3.91E-02 *<br>(1.51E-02)    |                             |                             |                             | 7.56E-02 ***<br>(1.73E-02)  |
| Constant           | 7.529 ***<br>(0.171)        | 5.911 ***<br>(0.683)        | 5.066 ***<br>(0.780)        | 4.869 ***<br>(0.777)        | 8.038 ***<br>(0.204)        | 6.840 ***<br>(0.826)        | 5.206 ***<br>(0.910)        | 4.825 ***<br>(0.892)        |
| Adjusted R squared | 0.077                       | 0.115                       | 0.144                       | 0.160                       | 0.099                       | 0.108                       | 0.196                       | 0.239                       |

Sources: Bada et al. (2011), IWFR website, IPUMS-CPS

Note: Hispanic Population (%) and Foreign Born Population (%) could not be added to the same model because of multicollinearity.

\* p < .05; \*\* p < .01; \*\*\* p < .001



**Table 3. OLS Regression Results for Protest Size and Volume in MSAs with Interaction Terms and IWFR as a Control Variable (n=109)**

|                           | Protest Size                |                             |                             |                             | Protest Volume              |                             |                             |                             |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
|                           | Model 1<br><i>b</i><br>(se) | Model 2<br><i>b</i><br>(se) | Model 3<br><i>b</i><br>(se) | Model 4<br><i>b</i><br>(se) | Model 5<br><i>b</i><br>(se) | Model 6<br><i>b</i><br>(se) | Model 7<br><i>b</i><br>(se) | Model 8<br><i>b</i><br>(se) |
| IWFR                      | 0.368 **<br>(0.118)         | 0.317 **<br>(0.118)         | 0.311 **<br>(0.118)         | 0.265 *<br>(0.118)          | 0.497 ***<br>(0.137)        | 0.418 **<br>(0.134)         | 0.434 **<br>(0.136)         | 0.362 **<br>(0.134)         |
| Union Member (%)          | -0.016<br>(0.023)           | -0.036<br>(0.027)           |                             |                             | -0.022<br>(0.027)           | -0.045<br>(0.030)           |                             |                             |
| Income                    |                             |                             | 5.60E-05<br>(3.28E-05)      | 2.35E-05<br>(4.31E-05)      |                             |                             | 4.06E-05<br>(3.79E-05)      | 7.12E-06<br>(4.92E-05)      |
| Hispanic (%)              | -0.004<br>(0.010)           |                             | -0.020<br>(0.029)           |                             | 0.008<br>(0.011)            |                             | -0.030<br>(0.034)           |                             |
| Foreign Born (%)          |                             | -0.006<br>(0.019)           |                             | -6.21E-02<br>(6.28E-02)     |                             | 0.024<br>(0.022)            |                             | -5.93E-02<br>(7.17E-02)     |
| Union Member*Hispanic     | (0.002) *<br>(0.001)        |                             |                             |                             | (0.002) *<br>(0.001)        |                             |                             |                             |
| Union Member*Foreign Born |                             | (0.003) **<br>(0.001)       |                             |                             |                             | (0.004) *<br>(0.002)        |                             |                             |
| Income*Hispanic           |                             |                             | 1.75E-06<br>(1.34E-06)      |                             |                             |                             | 3.00E-06<br>(1.55E-06)      |                             |
| Income*Foreign Born       |                             |                             |                             | 4.38E-06<br>(2.61E-06)      |                             |                             |                             | 5.83E-06<br>(2.98E-06)      |
| Constant                  | 7.473 ***<br>(0.313)        | 7.524 ***<br>(0.358)        | 5.675 ***<br>(0.890)        | 6.335 ***<br>(1.159)        | 7.737 ***<br>(0.361)        | 7.649 ***<br>(0.406)        | 6.234 ***<br>(1.029)        | 6.744 ***<br>(1.322)        |
| Adjusted R squared        | 0.115                       | 0.139                       | 0.151                       | 0.178                       | 0.187                       | 0.237                       | 0.217                       | 0.262                       |

Sources: Bada et al. (2011), IWFR website, IPUMS-CPS

\* p < .05; \*\* p < .01; \*\*\* p < .001

For Union Member\*Foreign Born, the Protest Size increases by 0.3, as a unit of Union Member\*Foreign Born increases, controlling for IWFR. This supports the seventh hypothesis, which states Protest Size is greater in MSAs with high levels of union density and high percentage of population who are foreign born, controlling for IWFR. Additionally, as a unit of Union Member\*Foreign Born increases, protest volume increases by 0.4, controlling for IWFR. This supports the eighth hypothesis: Protest volume is greater in MSAs with high levels of union density and high percentage of population who are foreign born, controlling for IWFR.

## **DISCUSSION**

The findings of this paper are largely twofold: (1) previous labor movements organized by unions played a significant role in determining the size and volume of the protests, and (2) union density alone does not predict the size or volume of the protests but the intersections between social groups, namely those comprised by variables, the Hispanic population and the foreign born population, and worker identities such as union membership play a role in determining the size and volume of the protests.

To elaborate, the findings support a number of previous literatures that theoretically suggest the significance of the IWFR. The IWFR is notable because of the human and organizational resources that the IWFR contributed to the 2006 protests. In other words, the MSAs that had organizational networks and history of hosting immigrant worker movements, were more likely to host larger protests overall. In this sense, it is evident that unions played a vital role in the organization of the 2006 protest because their human and organizational resources were extensively utilized. For protests to occur, there are some social and political conditions that need to be met. Each field, in this case, cities, needs to be socio-politically prepared for a social

movement. In this case, the experiences of having hosted the IWFR functioned as enabling dimensions of the 2006 immigrant and Hispanic worker mobilization in the service economy characterized by high employment, immigration, and income-inequality.

**Table 4. Hypotheses Results**

| <b>Hypothesis</b>             | <b>Variable</b>   | <b>Expected Signal</b> | <b>Results</b> |
|-------------------------------|---|------------------------|----------------|
| Organizational Resource       | Protest Size/IWFR   | +                      | Supported      |
|                               | Protest Volume/IWFR                                       | +                      | Supported      |
| Single Worker Identity        | Protest Size/Union Percentage                             | +                      | NS*            |
|                               | Protest Volume/Union Percentage                           | +                      | NS*            |
| Intersectional Organization A | Protest Size/Union Percentage * Hispanic Percentage       | +                      | Supported      |
|                               | Protest Volume/Union Percentage * Hispanic Percentage     | +                      | Supported      |
| Intersectional Organization B | Protest Size/Union Percentage * Foreign Born Percentage   | +                      | Supported      |
|                               | Protest Volume/Union Percentage * Foreign Born Percentage | +                      | Supported      |

\*NS= Not significant

Moreover, the findings indicate that class identity politics need to intersect with social groups in order to contribute to the size and volume of the protests. Social groups alone did not predict the size and volume of the protests which indicate that intersectional organizations of protests are salient in determining the success of protests. This is related to the concept *situated intersectionality* which stresses the intersections of social group divisions that create an unequal distribution of power and identities.

Overall, the findings suggest that unions were at the core of the protest organization. It is evident that unions adopting an intersectional organization was a successful strategy for the 2006 protests. If the unions had focused solely on a shared worker identity, the protests may not have been as successful and if the unions only emphasized social group divisions, the protests would

not have aligned well with unions' interests in workers' rights and it would not have resonated with a wider population. At this time in history, with all the given social and economic conditions of the service economy with high employment, immigration, and income-inequality, I argue intersectional organization of protests, an organization strategy adopted by the unions, played a vital role in increasing the size and volume of the 2006 protests.

## **CONCLUSION**

This paper investigated how intersectional organization impacts protest size and volume. The findings of this paper suggest that fields where organizational capitals were available had bigger immigrant rights protests in 2006 and fields that had a stronger worker identity among immigrant and Hispanic workers also had bigger protests. These findings indicate that unions played an integral role in shaping the 2006 protests. The IWFR was a statistically significant variable throughout and fields that had more Hispanic and Immigrant union members were also statistically significant. Unions, in organizing the 2006 protests, adopted intersectional organization which led to the success of the protests because they addressed Hispanic and immigrant workers' rights instead of focusing solely on worker identities. H.R.4437 did not pass the senate, and the protests marked a historical point in which Hispanic and immigrant population in the U.S. showed their political participation.

Following from this, I recommend worker movements and organization leaders to engage in intersectional organization of movements and strategize around the intersections of these various worker and social identities. Emphasizing worker identity alone may not be as effective. Cornfield's (2015) concept of "inclusive strategic orientation" is useful in understanding the importance of diversity in social movement strategies. An inclusive strategic orientation refers to

strategic alliances that aim to encourage social diversity in a given social space in order to unite activists and “the leaders of underrepresented and marginalized minority groups” (Cornfield 2015: 164). Therefore, MSAs can be understood as spaces where inclusive strategic orientation is encouraged and highly valued.

Future research on inclusive strategic orientation may be consequential for labor mobilization. Intersectional organization was useful in the 1970s and it marked a turning point in labor movements in the U.S. and it is important in the service economy characterized by high employment, immigration, and income-inequality. It would be valuable to research whether the importance of intersectional organization within worker movements also applies to other historical eras with unique economic and social conditions. This would provide a greater understanding of worker related movements as well as directions for future worker movements.

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