

Community-Based Organisations and Migration in New York City

Héctor R. Cordero-Guzmán

This article shows how immigrant Community-Based Organisations (CBOs) play a central role during all parts of the immigration process and in the social, cultural, political and economic adaptation and incorporation of immigrants. It is based on interviews, and a survey with immigrant organisations in New York City. I argue that CBOs play a key role in: a) assisting individuals and families in the reunification process by providing advice and legal help to enter the country, change their immigration status, or sponsor relatives to come to the United States; b) providing an array of social services and community programmes that are designed to assist in the socio-economic adaptation and incorporation of immigrants into US society; c) serving as an advocate for their ethnic groups by articulating the social-service needs and representing the concerns of their group in metropolitan-level political and policy processes and, also, by managing the flow of resources from the metropolitan to the community level; and, lastly, d) serving as a liaison between immigrant communities in the US and their country of origin and between the countries of origin and immigrant and other communities and constituencies inside the US.

Keywords: Immigrant Organisations; Social Services; Transnationalism; Third Sector; Community Development

In recent years there has been increasing interest on the part of social scientists in the study of immigrant groups, organisations and service providers. In this article, I address two specific theoretical and empirical gaps in the recent literature on immigration and organisations. First, I discuss factors related to the development of immigrant organisations and present the main characteristics of immigrant groups, organisations and service providers in New York City. Second, I examine the

Héctor R. Cordero-Guzmán is Associate Professor and Chair of the Department of Black and Hispanic Studies at Baruch College—CUNY, New York City. Correspondence to: Prof. H.R. Cordero-Guzmán, Department of Black and Hispanic Studies, Baruch College—CUNY, Box B4-280, One Bernard Baruch Way, New York, NY 10010, USA. E-mail: hcordero@aol.com; Hector_Cordero@baruch.cuny.edu

functions that these organisations have in four areas of the migration process: the development, management and maintenance of networks; the provision of social services to immigrant children and families; the building of community resources or 'social capital' in immigrant communities; and the maintenance of ties and connections to the countries and communities of origin.

The Literature on Immigrant Groups and Organisations

New York has always been an important centre for migration (Cordero-Guzmán *et al.* 2001). During the 1940s, there were 32,269 immigrants per year; 21 per cent of immigrants to the United States settled in New York City. Immigration numbers increased significantly in the 1960s to an average of 57,557 persons per year, then doubling again to 112,598 per year by the early 1990s. By the late 1990s, following significant changes in immigration and welfare laws in 1996, the number of legal immigrants to New York City decreased to around 89,000 per year (Department of City Planning 1999: 2) but the volume of immigration has remained high. The volume of migration—more than one million new immigrants in the decade of the 1990s—and the diversity of national origins have resulted in the formation of many new organisations and have presented challenges and opportunities to established immigrant organisations and service providers.

Some researchers have emphasised the importance of immigrant networks to the adaptation and incorporation of immigrants and to the development and maintenance of immigrant communities. In their seminal analysis of Mexican migration, Massey and his collaborators (1987) recognise the role of voluntary associations when they write:

Thus far we have considered various social relationships that make up immigrant networks, but no less important are certain institutional mechanisms that facilitate the formation and maintenance of social ties. A variety of voluntary associations established by immigrants in the United States promote regular interpersonal contact, greatly facilitating the process of adaptation and mutual assistance (Massey *et al.* 1987: 145).

Other researchers have focused directly on the role of community-based organisations (or CBOs) in various aspects of the immigration process and some key themes begin to emerge. Lissak (1989) analyses the history of social services to immigrants, the early development of settlement houses, and the involvement of the Chicago School in that process. Jenkins (1981, 1988) addresses the role of ethnicity in social service provision and how social work practice and service provision had to adapt to changing and diverse populations. Basch (1987) looks at voluntary associations among the Vicentians and Grenadians and finds that these groups provided direct assistance to immigrants. Kasinitz (1992: 111–23) discusses the role of community organisations in political representation and incorporation among Caribbean and West Indian populations. In an important paper, Hagan and González

Baker (1993) document the influence of CBOs in shaping policy during the implementation of the Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) after it was signed into law in 1986. They argue that CBOs performed a central role in the legalisation process and in the actual shaping and implementation of the policy at the local level:

The community group role evolved from the INS [US Immigration and Naturalization Service] vision of paperwork assistant into an activist role on behalf of applicants. Indeed, the local INS itself changed in the wake of community group influence, becoming more receptive to community concerns and more accountable to community interests (Hagan and González Baker 1993: 521).

Their research documents how the 'task force' created by the local CBOs produced publicity materials, appeared in the media, contacted officials, and ultimately sued and won in order to clarify and establish regulations affecting immigrants applying for legalisation.

While several researchers have examined the role of CBOs in various aspects of the migration process, we do not have a more complete picture of who these groups are, what kinds of programmes and services they provide, where they are located, who they serve, and what kinds of resources they have. Historical research on immigration has included work on immigrant organisations (see Moya in this issue). This article seeks to add to our knowledge by placing immigrant organisations and service providers, as a group, at the centre of immigration, organisations and non-profit research (cf. Salamon 2002).

Data and Methods

The New York Immigrant Organizations Project (NYIOP) evolved in several phases. During the first phase I identified and used a number of directories of organisations to develop a database that included general information on community-based organisations and service providers that worked with immigrants in New York City. After we prepared the initial database, my team of research assistants and I collaborated with New York City Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs and Language Services (MOIALS), and we cross-referenced our list with their database of service providers. We then collected and updated contact information (address, telephone, fax etc.) and basic profile data on each organisation in the database. We collected information on direct services provided, referral services provided, presence of licensed legal, medical and mental health practitioners on site, BIA [Bureau of Immigration Affairs] accreditation status, geographic service area, languages spoken by staff, number of clients served during the previous year, percentage of the clients who were foreign-born, and top countries of origin of the clients served.

I had several criteria for selecting organisations into the study: a) incorporation as a not-for-profit enterprise with the Federal Government which legally charters the group as a tax-exempt organisation, b) an office open to the public with regular

hours, c) the provision of direct services to clients, d) paid staff, and e) sources of funding for the services and programmes. I also focused on groups and organisations that provided direct services to more than 75 clients a year and where more than 15 per cent of the clients were foreign-born (my operational definition of immigrants). We ended up with a database on 317 groups throughout New York City.

During the second phase of the study we selected and interviewed the executive director or senior staff of organisations chosen to represent a variety of locations, populations served, and the particular mix of services provided. My objective was to develop a sense of who these groups were, what kinds of services they provided, and what were the main challenges that they faced. We used the information to develop an informed survey instrument. Following the in-depth interviews, I collected additional information on immigrant organisations and service providers by administering the in-person survey to a stratified random sample of 87 organisations taken from the larger database of groups throughout New York City. The survey was conducted between September 1999 and August 2000. We collected detailed information on these CBOs, including the mission of the organisations, their programmes, services and activities, the characteristics of clients and staff, other organisational characteristics, their perspectives on social service and policy issues, and a sense of their challenges. During this phase of the research, I also conducted in-depth studies of Dominican organisations in Washington Heights, organisations in the Lower East Side, immigrant health services, a smaller study with 20 organisations focusing on immigrant youth issues, and a study of 35 organisations focusing on day-labour populations. Lastly, I also participated in meetings, forums and events with immigrant organisations. The data collection process generated over 150 hours of audio-taped survey data and fieldwork interviews, all of which was transcribed.

Types of Immigrant Organisation

Organisations can be categorised based on *what they do* (the type of services they provide), *where they are located* (the communities where they provide services), or *who they serve* (the characteristics of the clients). Categorising organisations based on what they do involves examining their mission and the primary mix of services offered. Focusing on where they are involves examining the characteristics of both the areas where the services are provided and the characteristics of the population in those areas. A third way of categorising organisations involves focusing directly on who they serve or the characteristics of the clients and participants in their various activities.

Organisations can also be categorised as immigrant, or 'ethnic', based on their mission and their history of providing services to particular immigrant or ethnic groups. However, there are several other criteria that can be used to categorise the 'ethnic' focus of CBOs. First, the composition of the board of directors reflects the leadership of the organisation and its composition is related to the character, functioning and culture of the organisation. Second, the backgrounds of the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) or senior executives can be used as criteria. The CEO is

important because this position represents the organisation to the staff, clients, and other constituencies outside of the organisation. A third element that can be used in determining the 'ethnicity' or 'national origin' of an organisation is the composition of the executive, full-time and part-time staff. The staff is the closest line of contact with clients and the community at large and its 'ethnicity' or 'national origin' is central to the work and culture of the organisation.

Organisations also differ in terms of the 'ethnicity' or 'national origin' of the clients that they work with and serve. Some organisations work mostly with clients from one country but even those groups that focus on one country will have some clients from other, often neighbouring, countries and regions. In other instances, organisations develop a pan-ethnic focus and provide social services to clients from a cluster of countries in a particular region (Asia, Latin America, the Caribbean, Europe). It is also important to point out that social-service providers that receive public funding are barred from discriminating on the basis of national origin. Lastly, a fifth element that can be used to categorise immigrant organisations is their geographic area of work. Does the organisation serve a predominantly 'immigrant' or 'ethnic' neighbourhood (predominantly African-American or Puerto Rican)? Do most clients come from one particular neighbourhood? Does the organisation focus on a particular region or area?

Some agencies focus on specific immigrant or ethnic communities and provide services to their co-nationals from the entire metropolitan area in hub neighbourhoods. This can be seen in the Dominican community, which concentrates its organisations in Washington Heights, or the Chinese community in Chinatown. Even though there are population clusters from each of these groups in other neighbourhoods—Dominicans in Williamsburg (Brooklyn) or Corona (Queens) and Chinese in Flushing (Queens) or Sunset Park (Brooklyn)—service providers from these groups still concentrate in Manhattan. There are other organisations, what I call below 'immigrant service providers', that offer services in a combination of neighbourhoods or, in some cases, throughout the entire metropolitan area. When all of these factors align, it is relatively easy to assign a particular ethnicity or national origin to an organisation. All of these criteria are indicative of a particular dimension of 'ethnicity' or 'nationality'. Discussions with many providers emphasised, however, that organisational mission and the characteristics of the clients are the most important factors in determining the 'ethnicity' of an organisation, followed by the characteristics of the staff and the ethnic or national-origin character of the area where the organisation works.

Turning now to the kinds of organisation that exist in immigrant communities, I found that there are three broad types of group that form the immigrant social-service delivery system:

- First, there are immigrant groups, associations and clubs. These groups are usually concerned with promoting social and economic ties, connections and activities between immigrants from particular countries or regions. They also have close

economic, social and political contact to their areas of origin, are mostly organised around community events, and have a relatively small social-service base. These groups, also known as Hometown Associations (HTA), proliferate in many immigrant communities and are often small, have a tight leadership, and form the basis from which more formalised groups may emerge (Orozco 2000).

- Second, there are the immigrant organisations. These groups have been formally incorporated as non-profit organisations. They have a service portfolio, a direct social-service base with clients, paid professional staff, offices open to the public with regular service hours, and some sources of funding. These organisations are usually involved in a broad range of social services to immigrants from a particular country (or region) and are central to the social-service delivery system for particular ethnic groups and in many ethnic or immigrant neighbourhoods.
- Third, there are the service providers with a large metropolitan-level social-service base. These organisations provide social services to clients from a variety of countries and also provide services to non-immigrant clients (often from racial and ethnic minority groups). These organisations are older, larger, often with multicultural staff, and many have offices in several neighbourhoods.

The Formation of Immigrant Organisations

Why, when, and how are immigrant organisations formed? Vermeulen, in this issue, makes significant progress towards answering this question. Our data also give us a sense of some of the necessary and sufficient conditions that have to be present in order for immigrant groups to form their organisations.

An immigrant organisation is an organisation formed by individuals who are members of a particular ethnic or national-origin group, for the purpose of providing social services primarily to immigrants from the same ethnic or national group. Immigrant organisations differ from other social-service providers in that they explicitly incorporate cultural components, and a consciousness of ethnic or national-origin identity, into their mission, practices, services and programmes. Some organisations, originally formed to provide services to particular groups, or to the general population, have evolved over time and tried to adapt to the needs of the new national-origin groups that have come into the region (Jenkins 1981, 1988). As new immigrant communities are established and grow, their families and children receive services from existing social-service agencies, which may or may not be run by members of their own ethnic or national-origin groups. But, over time, immigrant groups face both internal community pressures and external pressure for representation that lead them to begin to form 'their own' organisations.

From our discussions and interviews, several factors are related to the formation of immigrant organisations. *First*, organisations are usually formed in immigrant groups that are relatively large and growing. *Second*, as the immigrant population settles and their needs develop, the groups begin to articulate a distinct sense of their social-service

needs. This usually has two components: first the group develops a sense of what services it particularly needs (needs assessment); and second it develops a sense of what it needs differently or the types of service that must be provided in a way that is consistent and sensitive to the cultural and social needs of the group (Vacc *et al.* 1995). If a group does not have an unmet demand for services or the service can be readily obtained from other existing providers the incentives to start organisations are clearly lowered.

A *third* element that I found to be related to the formation of immigrant organisations was the existence of a social-service professional and human-resource base from the immigrant community that would serve to start, guide, direct, manage and administer the organisations. In several instances the founders of organisations worked in the senior staff of metropolitan-level service providers or service organisations from related groups; eventually such persons left these organisations to start groups to directly serve and strengthen 'their communities'. Human resources are key and many of the staff who work in immigrant organisations are educated in some of the leading policy and management schools in the city and have experiences in both: their communities and mainstream institutions and organisations.

A *fourth* element related to the formation of immigrant organisations, then, is connections to the metropolitan social-service delivery system. In New York, the state funds community-based social services largely through a network of non-profit providers. This means that someone from the community has to have the capacity to understand the grants and contracts application process and all of the intricacies of programme development, design, management, reporting and evaluation. Some human-resource capacity and connections to the metropolitan social-service delivery system are key assets that need to be present within the immigrant community in order for its associations to develop into more sustainable organisations.

The *fifth* element is organisational resources and capacity. Members of immigrant communities who come with experience in the formation and management of organisations, sometimes acquired in the country of origin, are more likely to form and sustain organisations. In the case of social-service providers, particularly from low-income immigrant communities where 'internal' resources may be more difficult to obtain, factors related to connections and networks with external resources are essential in securing the flow of funds that are needed to manage and maintain a non-profit organisation. While immigrant organisations often emanate from, are connected to, subcontract with, or compete with the metropolitan-level service providers, together they make up the immigrant service-delivery system.

There are other more idiosyncratic factors that were present in particular cases but an analysis of the data reveal that the above five factors are both necessary and sufficient for any national-origin group to form their organisations.

The Characteristics of Immigrant Groups, Organisations and Service Providers

From the list of 317 organisations included in our database, I drew a stratified (by borough) random sample and surveyed 87 organisations (27 per cent of the total).

The survey discussed many aspects of the organisations including history, mission and programmes. I also collected information (summarised in Table 1) on the number of years the organisation has been in operation, its location, the characteristics of staff, size of budget, sources of funding, number of clients served per year, and the characteristics of clients. This section reports our main findings from the survey and gives us a sense of the characteristics of immigrant organisations and service providers in New York City.

Year Started and Location

Since the 1950s there have been two historical markers of American immigration that have also been periods where a large number of immigrant organisations have been formed. The first period is during the late 1960s and early 1970s, following the civil rights movement and changes in the racial, ethnic or national composition of immigration flows to the United States—coming increasingly from Asian, Latin American and Caribbean countries. A second period of organisational growth occurred during the late 1980s following the Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) of 1986 and subsequent acceleration of mass immigration to New York. The oldest agency in our sample was started in 1893 and newest two in 1995. Close to 12 per cent of the agencies were started before 1929 and another 9 per cent were started by 1969. Most of the organisations (51 per cent), however, were started between 1971 and 1985, and the remaining 21 groups (27 per cent) started after 1986.

In terms of location (see Figure 1), 45 per cent of the organisations were located in Manhattan, 24 per cent in Brooklyn, 20 per cent in Queens, 6 per cent in the Bronx and 5 per cent in Staten Island. Manhattan is over-represented if we compare the location of the organisations to the location of immigrants in New York City. An analysis prepared by the Department of City Planning (1999: 10) revealed, for example, that 36 per cent of immigrants admitted to New York City in 1995–96 resided in Brooklyn, 31 per cent in Queens, 18 per cent in Manhattan, 13.5 per cent in the Bronx and 1.5 per cent in Staten Island.

Staff Size and Characteristics

In terms of full-time (FT) staff, the average number of employees is 113 and the median is 17. Around a quarter of the organisations have fewer than five FT employees and another 25 per cent have between six and 16; the largest 25 per cent of the agencies have more than 50 employees. The sum of all FT employees in the sample is 7,413, suggesting that the non-profit immigrant social-service sector employs a significant number of persons. The figures are affected by five large agencies. There are two organisations in the sample with 350 FT employees, one with 800, one with 1,200, and one with 2,000. This last organisation is present in many neighbourhoods and has a significant proportion of contracts to provide services to the elderly, mental health programmes, employment training and refugee resettlement. The average

Table 1. New York City survey of immigrant groups and organisations

	Year organisation started (n = 82)	Annual budget \$US (n = 74)	FT staff (n = 81)	PT staff (n = 60)	Percent bilingual staff (n = 83)	No. of clients (n = 80)	Percent immigrant clients (n = 79)	Percent undocumented (n = 33)
Mean	1970	7.5m	113	54	70	13,582	64	29
Median	1976	1.0m	17	2	80	3,500	65	20
Minimum	1893	7,300	0	0	0	75	10	0
Maximum	1995	120m	2,000	1,000	100	250,000	100	95

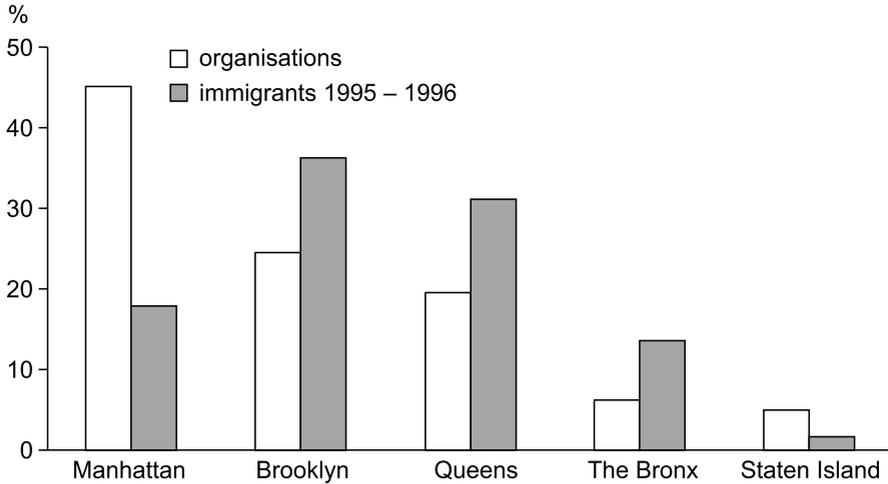


Figure 1. Immigrants and community organisations.

number of part-time (PT) employees in the sampled agencies is 54 and the median is two; 47 per cent of the organisations do not have any PT employees and another 30 per cent have fewer than five. Around 25 per cent of the organisations have more than 10 PT staff and, again, there are five agencies at the top of the distribution that have more than 100 part-timers, with the largest reporting 1,000.

The information on the percentage of the staff who are bilingual indicates that these organisations are a significant linguistic resource and asset. The bottom 12 per cent of the agencies have fewer than 20 per cent of staff bilingual while in more than 80 per cent of the organisations over 40 per cent of the staff are bilingual. In 37 per cent of the agencies all the staff are bilingual. In terms of the languages spoken by staff, 70 per cent of the agencies reported that some of their staff spoke Spanish. The other most common languages were, in order, Korean, Chinese, Haitian Creole and Russian. There are 18 other languages represented among the top two languages reported by the 87 organisations in the survey. Clearly, one of the central defining features of immigrant organisations is the presence of a significant proportion of staff who can speak several languages.

Budgets

The data on the total budgets for the organisations during the previous complete year indicates that the average budget was \$7.5 million while the median was \$1 million. Measures of central tendency provide some information but the dispersion in the data is quite interesting. The bottom 10 per cent of the agencies had a budget of less than \$80,000. Another 39 per cent had budgets between \$120,000 and \$800,000. The bottom quartile of the distribution is below \$250,000. At the top of the distribution, 25 per cent of the organisations had budgets higher than \$4 million. The top five agencies have budgets of \$25, \$28, \$35, \$72 and \$120 million. The sum of all agencies

in the sample is \$438 million, which gives us a sense of the level of resources and services that flow through these organisations.

Sources of Funding

When asked about whether they had any government grants or contracts, 69 per cent of the organisations indicated that they received federal grants or contracts, 80 per cent indicated that they received state grants or contracts, and 89 per cent indicated that they had city grants or contracts. Religious organisations were less likely to receive government funding. The most common sources of funding for immigrant organisations are: government contracts and sub-contracts (56 per cent), community fundraisers and individual donations (18 per cent), foundation grants (15 per cent), corporate contributions (5 per cent), funds from the church, and, in rare instances, fees for services.

Looking more closely at the sources of funding, it is clear that a significant amount of agency budgets come from government. While 34 per cent of the organisations received less than 40 per cent of their budget from government, more than half of the agencies received over 65 per cent of their budgets from government sources. In terms of grassroots funding, this is the second most important source of funding for these groups. At the lower end of the distribution, 30 per cent of the groups do not generate any grassroots funding and another 40 per cent of groups receive between 1 and 20 per cent of their budget from grassroots fundraising. For the top 25 per cent of the agencies, 10 per cent receive between 25 per cent and 40 per cent of their funding from grassroots, and the other top 15 per cent of organisations receive more than 50 per cent of their income from grassroots activities (with one organisation reporting that all income came from grassroots funding).

Another source is organised philanthropies or foundations, but half of the agencies received less than 8 per cent of their budgets from foundations. Only 10 per cent of the organisations had more than 35 per cent of their budget coming from foundations. Similarly, immigrant organisations receive a small share of their budgets from corporations. Around a half of the groups do not receive any contributions from corporations and another third received less than 17 per cent of their budget from corporations. Two organisations received 20 per cent of their budget from corporations, three received 25 per cent and one received 45 per cent. Lastly, 84 per cent of the agencies did not report any other source of income while 15 per cent reported some income from other sources. Only in rare instances do clients pay a fee for particular services.

Number and Type of Clients

The data on the distribution and number of clients in a year for the organisations indicates that the average number of clients was 13,582 and the median 3,500. The smallest agency served 75 clients while the largest (by far) indicated that they served

250,000 persons—a figure that reflects referrals, indirect clients, outreach and advocacy. The bottom 20 per cent of the agencies had fewer than 500 clients. Approximately 15 per cent of the agencies served between 11,000 and 25,000 clients while the top 10 per cent (8 agencies in the sample) indicated that they served over 40,000 clients.

When asked the proportion of clients who were immigrant (or foreign-born), the average was 64 per cent and median 65 per cent. The bottom quartile had fewer than 30 per cent immigrant clients. One in seven of the agencies indicated that 100 per cent of their clients were immigrants.

I also asked the agencies to estimate the proportion of their clients who were undocumented. The average undocumented is 29 per cent while the median was 20 per cent. While 54 organisations did not answer the question, it is interesting to note that 10 per cent of the agencies indicated that more than half of their clients were undocumented. The reluctance of many agencies to answer a question on undocumented clients is understandable in the light of recent changes in the laws which allow organisations to service undocumented clients in some government-funded programmes (child health) but not others (food stamps). Some church groups refuse to receive government funds in order to free themselves from any restrictions on providing services to the undocumented. Many other agencies feel that restrictions on serving the undocumented run counter to their mission of serving everyone in need regardless of immigration status and they try, often with great difficulty, to find private funds to service that population.

Countries of Origin of Clients

In terms of race, ethnicity and national origin, we asked three questions. The first inquired about the share of clients who came from particular regions and groups. The second asked organisations to name the top countries of origin of their clients. The third asked the organisations to name any 'new' immigrant groups they were serving. In terms of countries of origin of the clients, the overall distribution seems to indicate that the largest proportion of clients are Latino or Latin American (34 per cent), followed by Asian (20 per cent), African-American (16 per cent), White (12 per cent), West Indian (8.5 per cent), Eastern European (7 per cent), South Asian (2 per cent) and Middle Eastern (2 per cent).

Looking more specifically at countries of origin, we analysed the data on the top three countries that the organisations mentioned. The data reveal that 30 countries are mentioned among the top three. The countries or regions that were ranked the highest include the Dominican Republic (28 service providers), followed by Puerto Rico (21), China (18), Mexico (12), Colombia (11), Korea (10), the former USSR (9), Haiti (8), Ecuador (7), Africa (6), Jamaica (5), Guyana (4), Trinidad and Tobago (4), and Ireland (3). Regarding 'new' groups, the countries and regions that were mentioned the most often were Mexico, followed by the Dominican Republic, China, Africa, the former USSR, Central America, Ecuador, Colombia, Haiti and Vietnam.

The ‘Ethnicity’ of the Organisations

We categorised the ethnicity of the organisations based on information about the origins and mission of the organisation and whether there was a concentration of clients from one particular ethnic group or area (see Table 2). Based on 79 responses, the predominant ethnicities of the groups were: Latino\Latin American (24), Asian (16), Mixed (14), West Indian (8), European (8) and African-American (6). The mixed-ethnicity organisations tended to be older and more-established groups, whereas the Asian and Latino organisations are on the whole of more recent foundation.

The Functions of Immigrant Groups, Organisations and Service Providers

Figure 2 sets out the various roles and functions of immigrant organisations and suggests that they are centrally involved in all four key parts of the migration process. Let us take each in turn.

Assistance with the Immigration Process

The first role that immigrant CBOs play is to assist families in the immigration process by providing advice and legal help for individuals who want to change their immigration status or sponsor relatives to come to the United States. Many organisations provide citizenship classes and immigration support services that help immigrants with the naturalisation exam and other aspects of the complex immigration process. These services include (in parenthesis is the percentage of organisations indicating they provide that particular service): a) citizenship services (76.5 per cent) which involve providing the citizenship classes and support services necessary for the naturalisation exam; b) legal services (59 per cent) involves the preparation of all of the legal paperwork involved in the immigration and naturalisation process, together with legal advice and counsel, certified fingerprinting, adjustment of status petitions, alien relative petitions, visa extensions and advanced parole, work authorisation, affidavits of support, diversity lottery visas, replacement of green cards, etc.; and c) interpretation and translation services (72 per cent) which involves translation and interpretation of documents and other materials between English and other languages. These services are central to the migration

Table 2. Main ethnicity of organisations by year studied

Year started	Asian	Latino	West Indian	European	Mixed	African-American	Af-Am/Latino	Total
Pre-1970	1	6	1	1	7	2	—	18
1971–85	9	11	5	5	4	3	2	39
Post-1986	6	7	2	2	3	1	1	22
Total	16	24	8	8	14	6	3	79

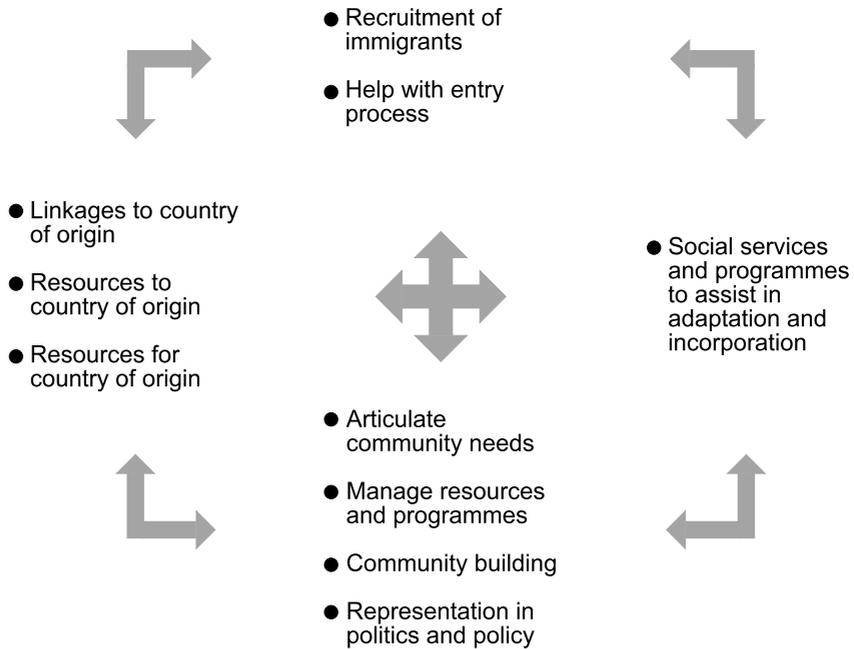


Figure 2. Functions of immigrant groups, organisations and service providers.

process but many organisations also provide shelter and other forms of initial support, access to community networks and information that are essential to newly-arrived immigrants.

Adaptation and Incorporation of Immigrants

Moving clockwise round the diagram, the second role of immigrant organisations is to provide services related to the adaptation and incorporation of immigrants into the new society. Unlike immigration services, most of these services can be dispensed both to immigrant and non-immigrant populations, but there are specific needs and challenges associated with providing services to the former. These include such matters as language, differences in knowledge about social services, cultural sensitivity, awareness of the most appropriate method to deliver services, and recognition of groups’ particular needs (Jenkins 1981, 1988; Padilla 1997; Vacc *et al.* 1995).

General social services (80 per cent) involve a wide array of economic, social and health services designed to improve the socio-economic status of the population. Specific social services include 12 tasks. The percentages refer to the proportion of the organisations surveyed which render the particular service.

- Benefits counselling (79 per cent), which involves advising individuals and families on what types of benefits, entitlements and other programmes they are eligible for. It helps them prepare an individual and family service strategy, assists

in the preparation of forms, and advocates with other organisations and agencies on behalf of families and children.

- Business counselling (28 per cent) helps individuals who have small businesses with technical assistance and support in all aspects of managing their business including business plans, raising capital, accounting, inventory, and other aspects of management.
- Educational services (89 per cent) involves a wide array of educational activities and programmes including Adult Basic Education (ABE), English as a Second Language (ESL), native-language literacy services, and General Equivalency Degree (GED) classes co-ordinated with other CBOs, or with nearby Community Colleges.
- Employment and training (or workforce development) services (66 per cent) are designed to prepare individuals for work and place them in employment. These schemes range from short-term (one- to three-week) job-readiness programmes, where resumés, interview skills and career expectations are emphasised, to six-month skills training in specific crafts and occupations.
- Family counselling and case-management services (63 per cent) involves providing general advice and support to families on personal issues, mental health, relations between family members, family problems, and related types of social work and case management.
- Food or nutrition services (53 per cent) involves food pantries, meal programmes for children and the elderly, counselling on access to food stamps, nutrition programmes, and access to child and infant nutrition schemes.
- General health services (54 per cent) involve access to primary care and family doctors for the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of all health-related matters.
- General legal services (34 per cent) entail free legal advice on matters related to programme access and participation, personal issues, family issues, criminal matters and other legal issues.
- Housing services (60 per cent) involve schemes that increase access to home ownership, assessment of rental housing, renovation of apartments, tenant management, property management, and related housing services.
- Mental health services (54 per cent) involve mostly prevention and treatment programmes and some emergency services.
- Substance abuse treatment (36 per cent) are schemes designed to prevent individuals from using controlled substances and for the treatment of substance abusers.
- Transportation assistance (46 per cent) provides transportation to schools, jobs, shopping, and other activities.

Another set of services provided by community-based organisations involves programmes for individuals undergoing special circumstances. These include:

- crime victim services (40 per cent), which involves support, guidance and advice;
- disability services (50 per cent), which involves programmes related to access, awareness, and activities for persons with disabilities;
- domestic violence services (59 per cent), which involves programmes related to prevention and counselling for victims;
- emergency services (56 per cent) involves services for persons and families who have undergone or are undergoing traumatic events and other kinds of food, shelter and health emergencies; and
- HIV/AIDS services (53 per cent) offer prevention programmes and support for individuals living with HIV/AIDS. This also includes schemes that provide contact with countries of origin and arrangements for continuity of care, visits to relatives, and other related services.

A third group of services provided by immigrant organisations involves programmes for particular sub-groups of the population. Included in this category are:

- children's services (63 per cent), aimed at children from six to 13 years of age;
- day-care services (35 per cent) for children under five years of age;
- gay and lesbian issues (36 per cent), which includes programmes aimed at increasing awareness, information, services and other forms of support;
- senior-citizen services (62.5 per cent) which consists of a range of health, social and other services for seniors;
- women's services (58 per cent), targeting the particular needs of women (one organisation, for example, offers counselling and support for the wives and daughters of drug addicts); and finally
- youth services (78 per cent): many organisations provide school-system support in order to help immigrant (and non-immigrant) parents to 'navigate' the intricacies of the school system in the United States and to be more effective at helping their children achieve their potential in school. Youth services also comprise interventions designed to ensure that children are receiving the adequate mix and level of in-school and after-school support.

While most of these services treat discrete needs, many are designed to help immigrants manoeuvre through existing bureaucracies and programmes. In that sense they help immigrants incorporate into the New York social-service infrastructure, and into the city's social fabric more generally. This should not be seen as a unidirectional process of 'Americanisation' but rather as a complex process of adapting to a new environment while simultaneously retaining elements of practice and action that emanate from the rules, practices and cultures of the countries of origin. Organisations help immigrants adapt while at the same time, often very deliberately, they help to maintain specific cultures and traditions. The importance of Americanisation for immigrant socio-economic incorporation has always been contested and immigrant aid societies have had to balance awareness and respect

of the particular cultural practices of their groups with the need for immigrants to adapt to their new, often more complex, social environment.

The tension between integration and the maintenance of customs and ties is present in most groups and has existed throughout the history of immigrant organisations. Archdeacon, for example, argues that:

for the social activists who moved into immigrant neighborhoods and established settlement houses, the term [Americanisation] meant giving the newcomers the wherewithal to survive in a modern industrial society. They tried to teach those who came to their settlement houses English, American social customs, and, when necessary, the rudiments of household management, health care, and sanitation. The best of those reformers, including the renowned Jane Addams of Chicago, performed their work without purposefully assaulting the immigrants' native cultures (Archdeacon 1983: 184).

One of the main challenges for immigrant CBOs, then, is to manage both the processes of adaptation and incorporation while at the same time recognising and maintaining particular cultural practices. Immigrant organisations do not see a contradiction in simultaneously striving to assist in the adaptation and incorporation of their members and helping to retain the traditions and norms of the countries and regions of origin. A key consequence of this process is that, in order to stay current, organisations need to change to incorporate and adapt themselves to the cultural practices brought in by the new immigrants and to the requirements and pressures exerted by the changing contexts and domains within which they operate.

Representation for the Immigrant Community

Another key function of immigrant organisations can be described as providing representation to the immigrant community (Figure 2). This process has several components that include:

- articulating the needs of the community to metropolitan-level policy makers;
- serving as an advocate and network for their ethnic groups;
- activities that can be categorised as 'community building';
- providing representation in politics; and
- representing the community in policy making, management and implementation.

Many CBOs are actively engaged in organising immigrants in their communities as a way to influence service delivery and inform members of the group about service needs in their communities. Community relations, organising and advocacy (88 per cent) involves advocating on behalf of the community and its members, or their ethnic/national-origin group, organising residents and group members around issues of relevance and importance to the community, and advocating to elected officials, government bureaucrats and others on particular challenges and needs of the community.

Organisations also provide a form of what can be called ‘social capital’ in terms of a set of resources, knowledge, services and information and are central to the reconstitution, formation and management of immigrant social, political and economic networks. CBOs are often engaged in activities which are not individual- or family-centred but involve the development of networks between residents and other organisations in the community with the purpose of building the physical, cultural, and human resources of the community. For instance:

- cultural heritage programmes (70 per cent)—art exhibitions, theatrical productions, television, video, films, music, radio and other kinds of activities of an artistic or cultural nature;
- community economic development (72 per cent)—initiatives related to the development of the economic and physical infrastructure of immigrant communities;
- conflict resolution (52 per cent)—teaching conflict-resolution techniques and improving levels of information and knowledge between various groups that reside in a community in order to monitor and minimise tensions; and
- labour rights and laws (33 per cent)—in order to teach workers about such laws, advocate and negotiate with employers on behalf of workers, issue claims for back wages, make complaints about poor working conditions, and bring public attention to unscrupulous employers and unfair labour practices.

Immigrant organisations also represent the needs and concerns of their particular group(s) in media discussions on immigration, ethnicity and social-service provision to immigrant populations. According to Hagan and González-Baker (1993), public education and information, and the policy making associated with that, are central roles in many organisations as they seek to inform policy debates on matters related to the socio-economic adaptation and incorporation of the group at the local and national level.

Lastly, immigrant CBOs are engaged in a complex relationship with elected officials. Such relationships range from one of complete dependence, to an attitude of co-operation and common benefit, and even to mutual disdain, contempt and neglect. However, as documented by Marwell (2003), immigrant CBOs are actively engaged in building ‘political’ constituencies and, in many instances, senior staff among the organisations in our study both actively ran and in some cases won elected office.

The ‘representation’ aspect of immigrant CBOs raises some questions and poses several challenges to the field. First is the question of what Salamon (2002) calls ‘the legitimacy challenge’, or determining exactly what the relationship is and should be between the organisations and the grassroots community. Second, immigrant CBOs, like all non-profits, face human resource, management, and other resource challenges that impact on the quality of their programmes. Third, organisations face pressure to accommodate to Requests for Proposals (RFP) that may or may not fit an assessment of their specific community needs and priorities. The pressure to respond to funding

imperatives versus community needs certainly affects the functioning, credibility and legitimacy of organisations. A fourth challenge, related to the complexity of managing the relationship between CBOs and elected officials (or party machines), is the potential for patronage politics and, in the worst cases, corruption. Fifth, immigrant organisations, particularly those that receive government funding, are in a contradictory relationship *vis-à-vis* the state in that they may advocate for particular programmes and positions but at the same time as they receive significant state resources for their programmes they are the *de facto* state representatives and agencies in their communities (Cordero-Guzmán and Navarro 2000). From the perspective of clients, they are receiving state-entitled services through the CBO, and therefore sometimes the line between 'the CBO' and 'the state' is blurred in practice.

Linking Immigrant Communities to their Countries of Origin

The fourth role of immigrant organisations represented in Figure 2 is to serve as a liaison between ethnic/national communities and their countries of origin. Managing this relationship has three main components. First, facilitating and encouraging the flow of economic resources, remittances and other investments to the country of origin. Many organisations have particular linkages to the main sending regions in the countries of origin and often sponsor not only movement of resources but delegations and visits to and from the countries of origin (Cordero-Guzmán *et al.* 2001). Some networks reaching to the country of origin are central in providing linkages between elected officials, government bureaucrats and political parties in the sending and receiving areas. Second, organisations are involved in facilitating and managing the flow of news and information and in the preparation of cultural, religious or patriotic activities of importance to the country of origin. And third, many organisations are engaged in activities designed to increase the level of information, public awareness, and political advocacy in the United States and attempt in many ways to influence US policy toward the country of origin. There are some challenges involved in managing the relationship to the country of origin, mainly that, while the immigrant community seeks to have active involvement and role in politics and policy in the country of origin, this often meets resistance from political party leaders in the countries of origin who would rather limit the involvement of these organisations (and communities) to raising funds and resources, and to advocating in the United States on behalf of home-country government policies and interest (Graham 2001). The Dominican government, for example, has actively met with Dominican organisations in New York and, as happens with several other groups, many members of organisations are actively engaged in politics and policy development both in the US and in the countries of origin.

Conclusion: CBOs and Migration Processes

Our research shows that immigrant groups, organisations and service providers fulfil several important social functions, fill key service gaps in their communities and are involved in all stages of the immigration and adaptation process. They are involved in the recruitment of immigrants, as people find out about possibilities of bringing relatives; they help others obtain visas; and they are involved in the actual entry and settlement process. Through their various services, CBOs play a central role in the orientation of immigrants, their reconstruction of social ties, and their adaptation and incorporation process. Immigrant organisations also play a central role in all aspects of community formation and development, including building community pride and identity, representation in politics (through personnel, connections and various kinds of support), in policy discussion, formulation and implementation (Hagan and González Baker 1993), in managing the relationship with elected officials (Graham 2001; Kasinitz 1992; Marwell 2003) and in managing the flow of metropolitan (federal, state and city) and private or donation resources to the local communities through various grants, loans and other forms of funding for programmes and activities. Lastly, these groups are part of the linkages to and from the country of origin (Basch *et al.* 1992; Graham 2001). They provide resources and information, including materials, human resources and funds for projects and activities, and are a resource to the countries of origin in the United States. All of these activities open up contacts, opportunities, information, exchanges, networks, development possibilities, and, ultimately perhaps, more migration (Cordero-Guzmán *et al.* 2001).

The more than 300 community-based organisations that make up the backbone of the immigrant service-delivery system in New York City, and that are replicated in cities and towns throughout the United States and other migrant destinations, are a vital part of the fabric of their communities and of a diverse civil society. Immigrant organisations are at the centre of programmes that assist in the social, economic and political incorporation of immigrants and in efforts to maintain contacts, investments and linkages with the countries and regions of origin. As several articles in this special issue show, understanding the role and functions of immigrant associations, their connections to metropolitan and national policy-makers, and their linkages to their communities is central to theoretical debates, research and understanding practice in the fields of organisations, non-profit management, race and ethnicity, and migration studies.

Acknowledgements

I gratefully acknowledge the kind support provided for this project by The Aspen Institute Non-Profit Sector Research Fund, The Ford Foundation and The Rockefeller Foundation. Several research assistants, including Ana Calero, Tracy Chimelis, Jocelyn DeGuia, Liz Díaz, Wendy Garcia, Juan Hernández, Kimann Johnson, Rasmia Kirmani, Migi Lee, Jose Navarro and Victoria Quiroz-Becerra, helped me with

various aspects of the project. I also would like to thank Floris Vermeulen, Marlou Schrover and Karen Shaw for their valuable comments and encouragement.

References

- Archdeacon, T. (1983) *Becoming American: An Ethnic History*. New York: Free Press.
- Basch, L. (1987) 'The Vicentians and Grenadians: the role of voluntary associations in immigrant adaptation to New York City', in Foner, N. (ed.) *New Immigrants in New York*. New York: Columbia University Press, 159–94.
- Basch, L., Glick Schiller, N. and Szanton Blanc, C. (1992) *Nations Unbound: Transnational Projects, Postcolonial Predicaments and Deterritorialized Nation-States*. New York: Gordon and Breach.
- Cordero-Guzmán, H. and Navarro, J.G. (2000) 'Managing cuts in the "safety net": what do immigrant groups, organisations, and service providers say about the impacts of recent changes in immigration and welfare laws?', *Migration World*, 28(4): 20–6.
- Cordero-Guzmán, H., Smith, R. and Grosfoguel, R. (eds) (2001) *Migration, Transnationalization and Race in a Changing New York*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- Department of City Planning (1999) *The Newest New Yorkers 1995–1996: An Update on Immigration to NYC in the Mid '90s*. New York: Department of City Planning.
- Graham, P. (2001) 'Political incorporation and re-incorporation: simultaneity in the Dominican migrant experience', in Cordero-Guzmán, H., Smith, R. and Grosfoguel, R. (eds) *Migration, Transnationalization and Race in a Changing New York*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 87–108.
- Hagan, J. and González Baker, S. (1993) 'Implementing the US legalization program: the influence of immigrant communities and local agencies on immigration policy reform', *International Migration Review*, 27(3): 513–35.
- Jenkins, S. (1981) *The Ethnic Dilemma in Social Services*. New York: The Free Press.
- Jenkins, S. (ed.) (1988) *Ethnic Associations and the Welfare State: Services to Immigrants in Five Countries*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Kasinitz, P. (1992) *Caribbean New York: Black Immigrants and the Politics of Race*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Lissak, S.R. (1989) *Pluralism and Progressives: Hull House and the New Immigrants, 1890–1919*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Marwell, N.P. (2003) 'Ethnic and post-ethnic politics in New York City: the Dominican second generation', in Kasinitz, P., Mollenkopf, J. and Waters, M. (eds) *The Second Generation in Metropolitan New York: Ethnographic Insights*. New York: Russell Sage, 227–56.
- Massey, D.S., Alarcón, R., Durand, J. and González, H. (1987) *Return to Aztlán: The Social Process of International Migration from Western Mexico*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Orozco, M. (2000) *Latino Hometown Associations as Agents of Development in Latin America*. Washington DC: Inter-American Dialogue.
- Padilla, Y. (1997) 'Social services to Mexican American populations in the United States', in Cardenas, G. and Ugalde, A. (eds) *Health and Social Services among International Labor Migrants*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 9–27.
- Salamon, L.M. (2002) *The State of Non-Profit America*. Washington DC: Brookings Institution Press.
- Vacc, N.A., DeVaney, S.B. and Wittmer, J. (eds) (1995) *Experiencing and Counseling Multicultural and Diverse Populations*. New York: Taylor & Francis.

Copyright of Journal of Ethnic & Migration Studies is the property of Taylor & Francis Ltd. The copyright in an individual article may be maintained by the author in certain cases. Content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.