Spontaneity during moments of the whirlwind: Airport protest to President Trump's original Muslim ban

Thomas Piñeros Shields

Abstract

In his first term, when President Trump announced an immediate travel ban on Muslim countries, protests emerged 'spontaneously' at airports across the country. Scholars have long debated the role of spontaneity vs. organizational capacity in protest (Snow and Moss, 2014). This paper theorizes the concept of the moments of the whirlwind (Engler and Engler 2016) to explain how social movement actors integrate spontaneity with pre-figurative protocols (Kruglanski 2024). Using private group chat data and a group history telling method with 18 members of the organizers of the Boston airport protest, the case reveals how organizations (1) decide to protest, (2) construct protest space, and (3) leverage protest to gain legitimacy. This study contributes to ongoing scholarship about spontaneity in protest by reaffirming the power of pre-existing organizational capacity.

Keywords: protest, spontaneity, whirlwind, mobilization, Trump Muslim ban, airport, immigration

Introduction

On January 27, 2017, President Trump signed *Executive Order 13769 Protecting the Nation from Foreign Terrorist Entry into The United States* banned travelers from seven Muslim majority nations (Iran, Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria and Yemen) from entering the United States (Trump 2017). By the next day, US Customs and Border Patrol (USCBP) officers hastily attempted to interpret and carry out the cancellation of 60,000 visas (ACLU 2017; Boston Globe 2017; Hersher 2017). By the next day, thousands of protestors in forty states transformed over fifty airports from sites of government surveillance and strict social controls into protest arenas (Collingwood et al. 2018; Gambino et al. 2017; Ramos and Ryan 2017). By the evening, a New York judge blocked the order, forcing the administration to rescind and revise the order (ACLU 2017; Hersher 2017). While protestors and lawyers claimed victory in 2017, Trump's early second term began with a flurry of executive orders that faced little to no sudden protest mobilization. In this context, experienced activists recognize the need for spontaneous protest events to respond to sudden political threats (Sifry 2025).

Sudden protest events like the response to Trump's 2017 Muslim Ban often appear "spontaneous protest," defined as "not planned, intended, prearranged, or organized in advance of their occurrence" (Snow and Moss 2014, 1123).

Activists often explain their actions as spontaneous (Polletta 1998; Snow and Moss 2014; Kruglanski 2024). Furthermore, political leaders, media and the public can be surprised by sudden large-scale protests that appear to emerge quickly and without forewarning (Leferman 2023; Kruglanski 2024). But while the media, public and social movement activists themselves understand how 'spontaneity' can play an important role in protest, social movement scholars have long disputed spontaneous explanations of protest, positing that a pre-existing organizational presence provides evidence against spontaneity (Snow and Moss 2014). Such critics represent spontaneous protest as an irrational and sudden event (i.e.- emerging out of Zeus' head) without a pre-existing organization or pre-planning, and in so doing, create a false dichotomy. For them, the presence of pre-existing organization and planning nullifies spontaneous actions and decisions. Recent scholarship questions this false dichotomy and revives interest in explaining protest through spontaneity (Kruglanski 2024; Leferman 2023; Snow and Moss, 2014, Cheng and Chan 2016; Flesher Fominaya 2015; Pilati et.al. 2019; Ho 2018; Anisin 2016).

The debate between spontaneity and organization obscures the role of contextual factors that initiate protest. Members of pre-existing social movement organizations often plan protest actions by marshalling a broad coalition of allies and stakeholders, determining talking points, scheduling an agenda with speakers, obtaining permissions and permits, recruiting people to attend and arranging logistics. Other times, perceived momentum for a demonstration emerges quickly, and would-be protest organizers adapt "spontaneously" to perceived opportunities and threats. This paper advances and theorizes the concept of "a moment of the whirlwind" to explain this latter situation (Engler and Engler 2016; Silfry 2025; Silfry 2021; Cash et al 2008).

Moments of the whirlwind require activists to act spontaneously, while also marshalling pre-existing organizational resources and routines to guide their contingent choices during a protest event (Sifry 2025; Sifry 2021; Cash et al 2008). Engler and Engler (2016) defined a moment of the whirlwind as "a dramatic public event or series of events that sets off a flurry of activity, and that this activity quickly spreads beyond the institutional control of any one organization" (Engler and Engler 2016, 178). Metaphorically, a moment of the whirlwind captures the feelings and point of view of activists during protest events as they strategize on the fly while navigating pressures from multiple, intersecting and sometimes contradictory social spaces. During a moment of the whirlwind, the usual rules and routines of protest may be suspended, temporarily changing strategic calculations of protest by granting access to contentious repertoires that would typically be unavailable. Donald Trump's 2017 Muslim Ban provoked a moment of the whirlwind that led to spontaneous protests at airports across the United States.

The current case study reveals micro-dynamic interactions within the moment of the whirlwind protest at Boston Logan Airport in which hundreds of peoples suddenly arrived at the international terminal for several hours. Data from a private group chat and group telling method reveal real time and on the fly actions

of protest organizers based on a combination of spontaneous decisions and pre-existing organizational priorities and capacity. Leaders of an immigrant rights social movement organization called Cosecha responded to the Muslim Ban by leading a protest at the Boston Public Airport. Analysis of their private group chat shows how leaders responded to a series of rapidly emerging political dilemmas that required spontaneous (unplanned), but intentional and strategic decisions: (1) deciding to protest; (2) appropriating control of a crowd and (3) leveraging that crowd to obtain power and standing with police, political leaders and the media. This contributes to understanding the interplay between organization and spontaneity in contentious protest during a moment of the whirlwind event.

Spontaneity and organization in protest

Both activists and scholars have long debated the relative influence of spontaneity vis-à-vis organization in political protest. Since the 19th Century, Hegelians, Marxists and New Left revolutionaries debated whether social forces determine actions or spontaneity mattered more in explaining human events (Kruglanski 2024; Dlugach 2009; Snow and Moss 2014; Marx and Engels 1848/1996). For instance, Holst (2009) explains how Antonio Gramsci believed the party could build organizations to transform the "ideas that sprang up from the spontaneity of day-to-day struggles of the popular classes" (Holst 2009, 627). Notably, Marxist revolutionaries including Vladimir Lenin, Leon Trotsky, and Rosa Luxemburg contributed to spontaneity vis-à-vis organization debates that others continued for over a century of which a full review would be beyond the scope of this paper (Roesch 2012; Holst 2011; Holst 2009; Chen 2015; Dlugach 2012).

By the 1960s, a new generation of revolutionaries, developed the idea of prefigurative politics, which some social movement scholars explain as a compromise between spontaneity and organizational control (Kruglanski 2024; Bevins 2023). Prefigurative politics refers to organizational structures in which groups enact the vision of the world that they want to create in the future, which some social movement scholars explained as a compromise between spontaneity and organizational control (Kruglanski 2024; Bevins 2023). Specifically, prefigurative politics emerged in the New Left and Students for a Democratic Society out of critiques of the bureaucratization of the Soviet Union which (they argued) subordinated means to ends (Bevins 2023). Events in 1968 such as the insurrection at Columbia University provide cases that explain the dynamics of how such prefigurative politics could be incorporated into non-hierarchical organizational protest structures (Bell 1968).

Spontaneity remains a potent explanation for activists. Polletta (2006) points out how the spontaneity among Civil Rights-era lunch counter protesters was situated within a larger cultural moment and socio-historical stage. Her analysis of narratives about the Greensboro lunch counter sit-ins reveals that activists saw 'spontaneity' as a central explanation for the actions.

> Spontaneity meant something other than unplanned. In fact, closer examination of the sit-in stories indicates that it meant several things. Spontaneity denoted the sheer power of moral protest. Sitting in was motivated by an imperative to act now that brooked no compromise. One simply put one's body on the line, without debating its ideological potential or waiting for instruction from higher-ups. (Polletta 2006, 40)

Activist longstanding use of protest spontaneity narratives continues among popular educators and community organizers moved beyond spontaneity narratives to develop theoretical frames that reaffirm spontaneity in protest (Polletta 2006; Moyer 2001; brown 2017; Engler and Engler 2016).

Just as revolutionaries and activists have long debated the relative importance of organization and spontaneity, social movement scholarship on this debate waxed and waned. Mid-20th century social movement scholars emphasized spontaneity in explaining protest events as cathartic responses after social strains reach a 'boiling point' to trigger social insurgency (McAdam 1999, 9). Similarly, Moyer (2001) defines a trigger event as a "highly publicized, shocking incident' that 'dramatically reveals a critical social problem to the public in a vivid way" (Moyer 2001, 54). Metaphorically, the term "trigger event" suggests a mechanical and automatic sequence of actions, but also implies something pathological and dangerous when used to describe emotionally upsetting events that cause past trauma to resurface. While social movement scholars sometimes discuss trigger events and spontaneity synonymously, the use of the term differs from spontaneity within protest. Trigger events suggest something that catalyzes a mechanical sequence of actions, while spontaneity affirms the agency of protestors. Instead of "trigger events" this case adopts the *moment of the whirlwind* metaphor to reintegrate spontaneous agency with organizations to explain protests.

By the 1980s, leading social movement scholars rejected "spontaneity," which they associated with the pathologizing and mechanistic logics that trigger events share with mid-20th Century scholarship such as structural strain and threshold theories of protest (McAdam 1999). As Kruglanski (2024) noted, scholars 'debunked' a definition of spontaneity characterized as a linear, directional and reactive explosive event. As such, scholarship about organization and spontaneity shifted towards an almost myopic emphasis on organization, as resource mobilization and political process theorists began to eschew and de-legitimize the role of spontaneity in explaining protest (Morris 1981; McAdam 1999; Snow and Moss 2014; Killian 1984). For instance, in one classic analysis of sit-in tactics during the Civil Rights Movement, Morris (1981) pointed to the importance of preexisting organizational forms to dispel claims of protest spontaneity. This rise of resource mobilization and political process theories led to a virtual erasure of spontaneity in explaining protest. Such social movement theories presented examples of preexisting organizational planning, strategy and structures in protest strategy and decision making, as evidence that protests were not spontaneous (McAdam 1999; Snow and Moss 2014). In part, this erasure stems from the juxtaposition of spontaneity and organization in dichotomous

opposition (Snow and Moss 2014,1125). In upholding this false dichotomy, scholars missed the ways protest actions could result from dynamic and dialectic interactions between organization and spontaneity.

More recently, scholars began to take notice of the shifting role of spontaneity in protest (Snow and Moss, 2014). In the past decade, there has been a renaissance of research into the role of spontaneity in social movement protest (Snow and Moss 2014, Cheng and Chan 2016; Flesher Fominaya 2015; Pilati et.al. 2019; Ho 2018; Anisin 2016). Snow and Moss (2014) re-theorized the relationship between spontaneity and organization in Occupy Wall Street and other protests, by identifying four precipitating conditions that promote spontaneity within protests, including non-hierarchical forms of organization. In so doing, they bridged the (false) dichotomy between organization and spontaneity (Snow and Moss 2014). Subsequent scholars incorporated spontaneity into analysis of Spain's 15-M movement (Flesher Fominaya 2015); Gezi Park protests in Turkey (Anisin 2016; Över and Taraktas 2017); the Umbrella Movement in Hong Kong (Cheng and Chan 2017), and the Sunflower Movement in Taiwan (Ho 2018).

Some critics still attempt to dismiss spontaneity's role in protest by pointing to preexisting organizations. In a paper entitled, "Debunking Spontaneity," Flesher Fominaya (2015) disputes 'spontaneity theses' by documenting how a small group of activists with established social networks and 30 years of deliberative cultural practices, initiated Spain's 15-M/ Indignados protest (Flesher Fominaya 2015). Such straw-dog arguments equate spontaneous decision making among protestors with "immaculate conception" origin myths of protest (Flesher Fominaya 2015, 158). Other definitions of spontaneity provide more room to allow protestors to engage in sudden on-the-fly decision making without requiring such decisions to emerge without any preparation or practice. For instance, Leferrman (2023) explores the multiple meanings and definitions of "spontaneity" in protest including temporal, spatial and immediacy, meaning a logical order to sudden protest events.

Other recent scholars also recognize spontaneity can play a role in protest strategy, noting "contingent and unplanned actions are by no means an antithesis of rationality and action" (Cheng and Chan 2017, 223). For example, many alternative organizations reconcile spontaneity with organizational planning by developing *prefigurative protocols* in the form of horizontal agreements that help members navigate uncertainty and spontaneity during day-to-day interactions (Kruglanski 2024, 82). Building on this idea, the current case study reveals how Cosecha's pre-established principles serve as prefigurative protocols applied to a sudden event. The next section will theorize the metaphor of the moments of the whirlwind to both advance and reconcile the longstanding debate related to spontaneity and organization.

Moments of the whirlwind

The defining attribute of a moment of the whirlwind is that it involves a dramatic public event or series of events that sets off a flurry of activity and that this activity

quickly spreads beyond the institutional control of any one organization. It inspires a rash of decentralized actions, drawing in people previously unconnected to established movement groups (Engler and Engler 2016, 177-178),

The earliest use of the moment of the whirlwind metaphor for spontaneous protest can be traced to Nicholas von Hoffman, lead organizer of The Woodlawn Organization with Saul Alinsky (Sifry 2021; Engler and Engler 2016). In 1961, von Hoffman is quoted as saying:

> I think that we should toss out everything we are doing organizationally and work on the premise that this is the moment of the whirlwind, that we are no longer organizing but guiding a social movement. To his surprise, Alinksy responded "You're right. Get on it tomorrow. (Engler and Engler 2016, 54)

This origin story of this metaphor moment of the whirlwind within Saul Alinksy's tradition has been repeated to become lore among community organizers and social movements (Sifry 2021). The morale affirms the importance of spontaneity in some cases (Sifry 2021; Engler and Engler 2016). Such spontaneous actions contrast sharply with the Alinsky structure-based tradition that emphasizes rational and planned strategic decision making and organization building. The paradoxical origin of the moment of the whirlwind from Alinksy's structured organization-centered school of social change suggests the metaphor's potential for bridging organization-spontaneity debates, which continue to resonate in 21st Century protest.

The moment of the whirlwind presents an apt metaphor for spontaneous protest, by recognizing those types of events when organizations and organizers must cede control to the unexpected rush of a crowd, while simultaneously seeking to harness that moment (Kruglanski 2024; Engler and Engler 2016).The moment of the whirlwind situates spontaneity in a temporal, albeit fleeting, episode of sudden protest events. The moment of whirlwind as a theory resolves abstract philosophical requirements that undergird joint action as both spontaneous and a rational activity (Leferrman 2023).

In the first decade of the 2000s, a group of revolutionary activists with roots in the alter-globalization protests of the late 20th Century formed Team Colors Collective, which sought to intervene in the organizing leading up protests around the 2008 Democratic and Republic National Conventions, through analysis of the political composition of the working class and the state, as well as critique of movements themselves (Cash et al. 2008). In the introduction to their 2010 edited book, the Team Colors Collective posit the potential of cycles, and contrasting the whirlwind period of the early 21st Century with past cycles of protest such as those in the 1960s (Hughes et. al. 2010). For Team Colors Collective (2010), current organizing reflected a tension between organization and spontaneous protest:

> Our discourse now is plagued with non-profit and professional thinking, to the point where the betterment of struggle takes a backseat to the betterment of organizations. (Hughes, et al. 2010, 9).

Team Colors Collective found promise in the metaphor of whirlwinds, pointing to the fluidity, openness and constantly shifting terrain of winds, which search for commonalities in new ways as they circulate, and sometimes come together into whirlwinds among multiple radical struggles to tease at revolution. Subsequently, the second decade of the 21st Century has been called a "mass protest decade," with protest events in Tahir Square and Arab Spring, Occupy Wall Street and others characterized by "horizontally organized, spontaneous and digitally coordinated" tactics (Bevins 2023, 4).

Furthermore, whirlwinds metaphorically imply forces of nature, which cannot be completely controlled or planned. Many of today's thought leaders and activists eschew deliberate and calculate structured organizing tradition but instead look for ways to influence the nature and shape of such events towards social movement or even revolutionary ends. This may be why Engler and Engler (2016) propose three propositions related to organizing around moments of the whirlwind:

> First, that moments of the whirlwind are not as rare as they might seem: second, that there is art to harnessing them when they occur spontaneously; and third, that activists willing to embraces a strategy of nonviolent escalation can sometimes set off historic upheavals of their own." (Engler and Engler 2016, 179).

Notably, Engler and Engler (2016) point to an "art," not science, to harnessing spontaneous moments of the whirlwind. This raises questions about how such moments of the whirlwind can be harnessed? The current case study explains how one group of protest organizers harness one such moment of the whirlwind protest event through joint, rapid, and strategic decision making that leveraged prefigurative organizational protocols.

This paper builds upon the integration of spontaneity and organization by arguing that prefigurative organizational protocols facilitated on the fly (spontaneous) decisions during a moment of the whirlwind (Kruglanski 2024). The anti-Muslim ban Boston Logan airport protest demonstrates how social movement organizers decided to protest, took control of the crowd and leveraged that crowd in negotiations with politicians, police and the media. These decisions happened quickly and without prior planning during a moment of the whirlwind.

Methods

Three primary sources of data were used in the construction of this case study: a transcript of a private group chat among 18 members of the social movement organization, *Movimiento Cosecha* (Cosecha), a focus group using the group chat transcript as a guide, and the live social media broadcast of the event. In addition, we held follow-up conversations with members of Cosecha.

Movimiento Cosecha

In July 2015, a small group of immigrant community organizers launched a campaign "for permanent protection, dignity, and respect for the 11 million undocumented immigrants in the United States." (Cosecha 2015). The group adopted the name *Movimiento Cosecha*[1] to reflect "the long tradition of farmworker organizing and the present-day pain of the thousands of undocumented workers whose labor continues to feed the country." Cosecha's all-volunteer team of activists and organizers rely upon donations for their sustainability. At the time of this case study, thirteen volunteer community organizers from faith-based, labor and immigrant rights movements constituted the core Boston team of Cosecha.

The founders of Cosecha abandoned community organizing approaches that emphasize building organizations, and instead, developed a movement-centered activist strategy, whose tactics include sudden nonviolent direct actions to disrupt existing social institutions, public demonstrations and economic noncooperation. They seek to mobilize a large portion of the US population to participate in a general strike among immigrants and their allies to ensure "permanent protection, dignity and respect for all undocumented immigrants" (Cosecha 2015). Cosecha's decentralized nonhierarchical structure builds circles consisting of three or more activists who commit to prefigurative protocols (Kruglanski 2024) in the form of a common set of fourteen principles developed by the original leaders (Cosecha 2015). Cosecha leaders describe the principles as "tools to protect the movement" that guide members to make decisions in response to strategic dilemmas during an action.

Group chat data

This study obtained rare access to private group chat discussions that took place among Cosecha organizers *during* the planning and implementation of this protest event. Between 8:08am on Saturday and 2:41pm on Sunday, 18 members of the organization communicated via a private group chat hosted on encrypted software *Telegram*. The members shared 620 relevant comments that were transcribed and presented as a timeline of events during the focus group with Cosecha leaders.

---

[1] The Spanish word "cosecha" translates to "harvest" in English.

Group history telling focus Group

On 1 March 2017, eight of the twelve Cosecha leaders met in their office and participated in focus group modeled after the *group history telling* method (Ryan, et. al 2013; Ryan, et. al 2016). Among the discussants, seven identified as Latino/a and one as white; two identified as male and the rest as female. The researcher did not collect data about the group members' nationality or immigration status, in compliance with human subjects protections outlined in their institutional review board (IRB) protocol. During the focus group, participants were prompted by the timeline of the group chat, which was projected onto a screen. Participants were asked to walk through the evening and describe key decisions and events that took place during the protest event. The focus group was recorded, transcribed and entered into the nVivo qualitative analysis software.

In addition to the Telegram feed and transcription of the focus group, the recording of Cosecha's live Facebook broadcast during the protest event was entered into nVivo qualitative analysis software. The video was incorporated into NVivo to triangulate time and dates of events during the protest event along with the transcriptions of the Telegram chat group and the subsequent focus group. All data was deidentified prior to analysis. An analysis of narratives within this data revealed three distinct strategic decision-making stages of the protest event that occurred that day: (1) deciding to protest; (2) appropriating control the protest event and (3) leveraging the protest to obtain legitimacy with powerful players. These three stages form the organizational spine of this in-depth case study in the following.

Deciding to protest President Trump's Muslim ban in Boston

On Saturday 28 January 2017, the Boston chapter of Cosecha planned a party to release stress, build community and raise funds; but those plans changed as news spread about people being detained at airports across the country. At 9:47am, Jorge, one of the Cosecha founders, typed three messages to the group chat: "Let's resiste/ Are there any in Boston Logan/ I can lead a march into the airport." This was the first call to protest among the Cosecha chat group members and it set off a day-long discussion amongst the members of Cosecha. As protests began at other airports around the country, Cosecha leaders sensed momentum for a Boston airport protest against the Muslim Ban. Still, they did not immediately react. Instead, they wrestled with the decision to organize an airport event. Their discussion centered around resolving three dilemmas. First, Cosecha sought to obtain ownership to protest policies that targeted a different constituent group, namely the Muslim community. Second, the leaders of Cosecha needed internal agreement from all the members of their group. Third, they wondered if they had the capacity to organize such a protest in a short time in light of growing national momentum for airport protests. How Cosecha leaders resolved these three dilemmas will be discussed in turn.

Claiming "ownership" of the protest

Activists often seek to be the "owners" of particular social problems or action (Best 2021). As used here "ownership" suggests that a particular group has a legitimate stake in the leadership of an action or event. Often such ownership of a protest involves obtaining legal permits from the state that provide legitimacy to the leaders of the protest event. In this case, however, Cosecha leaders sought permission from the people most affected by Executive Order 13769, the Muslim community.

Cosecha's primarily Latino/a constituency works on immigration reform, an issue that is tangential to, but not the same as the oppression of Muslim people in the United States. Cosecha leaders recognized a dilemma of a primarily Latino/a organization taking a lead in responding to policies that targets the Muslim community. In our focus group, Natasha asked, "are we going to be seen as being opportunistic?" In response to this dilemma, Cosecha developed a public "solidarity pledge" with the words "MUSLIM SOLIDARITY @ EVERY AIRPORT," which they began to share on social media in the early afternoon. While this solidarity pledge centered Cosecha's allyship with the targets of the travel ban, this still did not legitimize Cosecha's ownership of the event. As Natasha noted, "we know that we are standing in solidarity, but are others going to see it like that? So for me that was a hesitation."

Cosecha leaders wanted the Muslim community's consent before they took leadership for the protest, but as in most communities, the Boston Muslim community is not monolithic. No one person speaks on behalf of the entire community, which complicated and delayed Cosecha's "spontaneous" protest. As a compromise resolution to this dilemma, Jorge tried to convince a local Muslim Imam to take the lead in an airport protest. When the Iman expressed reluctance to protest at the airport without permits, Jorge asked for tacit permission for Cosecha to lead the protest. The Imam did not oppose the idea, which Cosecha took as sanction for them to assume leadership of the Boston airport protest event.

Obtaining consensus to protest

During the afternoon, Cosecha leaders communicated in person, on the phone and in the Telegram chat about plans for the protest. While they agreed on the importance of this action, they also considered the needs of group members. The stress of feeling attacked during Trump's first week in office took a toll on members.

> We had a huge community resonating session (two days prior), with everybody in Cosecha, and that took many hours and people were crying, a lot of emotions were expressed and I felt that tone that on that day carried out for the rest of the week. That is why we felt very drained on that day.

Other executive orders and public statements that targeted immigrants drove this stress. Members felt a range of emotions, including fear, uncertainty and risk. They intended to have a party to relieve this stress.

At one point, Mari wrote into the chat "Let's move the party to the airport." The group turned to the leaders who had spent the week planning the party for the final decision about whether or not to protest. They referred to these two as the "bottom liners" meaning that they would have the final decision-making authority for initiating the action or not:

> We were in the car, and we were like, it's up to you two whether we change from the party. We could do the party at the airport potentially (chuckle), but like cancel the party and move it to the airport. At 4:30, it was like yes, then we started communicating out with everyone, and we started moving the pieces forward.

As deliberations continued, Jorge designed a Facebook event invitation for an airport protest, originally announced to begin 4:00pm, but Cosecha decided to move the start of the protest to 7:00pm. Very quickly, hundreds of people had seen the invitation.

As they travelled to Logan Airport, Cosecha members began to assign roles to one another to lead the program, keep the crowd engaged, coordinate with the Boston media, host the livestream Facebook feed, work as police liaisons, and reach out to allied groups such as immigrant rights groups, labor unions, and ACLU lawyers. Cosecha's leadership began to redefine the airport as a contested protest space that they could coordinate through a common and established organizational network.

Overcoming fears and responding to momentum

In addition to stress, some of the organizers suppressed fear that they could not actually manage to execute an effective airport protest event. Francesca explained:

> It's also that we were just scared that we were going to make a call for this and nobody was going to show up. And that was a lot of the phone conversations… but I remember being in the car and people on the phone saying, 'but are people actually going to show up?" And so, if we were to do something when we were tired, and put, literally all of our resources as volunteer organizers, if no one goes. then it's like, ok?

Such fears were countered by the reports from other airports. While the Boston based Cosecha team deliberated, news stories reported on protest events that that emerged "spontaneously" at airports across the country. One story from Pro

Publica reported the Muslim ban would block over 500,000 legal residents from reentering the US, Jorge wrote in the group chat: "500,000!!!!, this is going to be a major trigger event."

A short while later, another member of Cosecha noted, "There is so much momentum here." Cosecha leaders recognized the airport protests as a political opportunity that was gaining "momentum." Rather than being purely spontaneous events, the shared private communications among protest organizers reveal that the organizers deliberately sought to capitalize on what they perceived to be a trigger event (Moyer 2001). This more spontaneous protest differed from pre-planned protest events that required weeks or month of deliberation, planning and resource mobilization. Instead, Cosecha leaders recognized and seized the political opportunities in the moment of the whirlwind.

In such a moment of the whirlwind, traditional rules of protest were suspended. For example, a union organizer approached Jorge with warnings that past attempts to protest at the airport failed, and would likely lead to police arrests, he explained how this protest event differed from her past organized labor strikes at the airport:

> Look, if there was no momentum nationally, and we came just us, with 50 people or even with 100 people, with no momentum, we would just get arrested immediately. There would be no negotiation. Right? And there were also no cameras, right? So, when you don't have momentum, they have way more authority than you. So, you have never done this…Because you don't have that momentum…but we have cameras here so we're good.

Jorge said to the labor organizer, "So, you have never done this" because those protests did not have national "momentum" including media attention and public interest. This analysis lends insight into how the rules for a protest event during a moment of the whirlwind differ from other situations. Also, this reveals that Jorge and Cosecha leaders perceived that "momentum" would allow them to assume control of the protest event and acquire leverage in negotiations with politicians, police and others. The next two sections will describe how Cosecha leaders took control of the protest event and used it to leverage negotiations with police and political leaders.

Appropriating the protest event

When Cosecha activists arrived at 6:30pm they encountered at least twelve people with signs who were "trying to start chanting." Cosecha leaders quickly assumed leadership of the protest event. Reflecting on that moment, Cosecha members described how they "took control" of the crowd. Far from a "spontaneous" reaction, leaders described four collective practices important for leading a protest: (1) assuming leadership of the program; (2) socializing attendees to the protest arena; (3) staying on message and (4) broadcasting the

message. Cosecha leaders quickly carried out these tasks during this moment of the whirlwind.

Assuming leadership of the program

During our focus group, Francesca, one of the Cosecha organizers reflected on a key moment that established them as early leaders of the protest:

> A beautiful thing that happened with Mari and Paula borrowing someone's mike (sic) who was there; like literally taking over that space in a lot of ways, in that it allowed us to have pretty much control of the program throughout the night. And so, we could pass it off internally… the first people who begin to do things are the ones that are seen as the ones that are leading the rallies, in some ways. And as more people arrive, you have more risk of other people or random people or other groups being the ones to sustain.

Francesca describes "literally taking over that space" that allowed Cosecha to lead the protest for the rest of the night. When she describes "who are the first people who begin to do things are the ones that are leading the rallies," she expresses the principle of "path dependency," which refers to how actions at an earlier point in time predict and define actions later in the evening (Mahoney 2000). In this way Francesca describes a phenomenon that is the inverse version of the "being there" dilemma, which is when a social movement player who exits a protest arena gives other players a freer hand to act in their absence (Jabola-Carolus et al. 2018, 5). In this case, Francesca is describing a "staying there" phenomenon in which Cosecha's ability to appropriate, hold and control the microphone early in the evening allowed them to "take over the space." In this otherwise public and open space, Paula and Mari established Cosecha as "the one who is going to run the program." While these two leaders maintained primary roles of guiding the program, over the next several hours, different members of Cosecha took turns speaking, introducing chants and messages along the way. In addition, using the group chat, they offered each other feedback and ideas. They led the attendees for the next three and a half hours.

Socializing attendees to the protest

As the crowd grew, new members needed to be socialized into the protest. Eliza described teaching members of the crowd songs and chants at the beginning to the smaller initial crowd, so as the crowd grew, newcomers could adopt the same messages. Cosecha leaders recognized that many people in the crowd were new to protesting, so they drew upon their repertoire of chants, songs and slogans. For example, one technique that the Cosecha leaders taught the protest attendees was known as the "people's mic." This tactic of communicating with large groups became popular during the Occupy protests of 2011. In the people's mic, the speaker makes a statement, pauses, and the crowd repeats that statement so that others can hear. Early in the evening, Eliza described teaching the crowd to use

the people's mic. Initially the protest attendees didn't react when she asked them to use the people's mic, so Eliza asked a small group of experienced activists to help her get it going. "We are going to use the people's mic." They repeated, "We are going to use the people's mic." She then gave instructions for the people's mic until the larger crowd caught on. She later reflected on the meaning of this moment saying, "It was an indication to me that people weren't familiar with mass protest who were there; it took a little bit of crafting to actually get it going."

In this way, Eliza and other leaders reacted to the dilemma of inexperienced protestors by innovatively teaching these tactics on the fly. At the same time, she drew upon an existing cultural practice used in many past protests. For some of those in attendance, they learned to adopt new normative practices. Strangers who stood together shouting in unison or repeating chants were not doing so spontaneously, but rather, relied upon cultural transmission of protest norms and the intentional efforts of experienced social movement activists.

Staying on message

In addition to socializing new members into the protest, Cosecha leaders sought to establish and maintain a clear message against the Muslim ban, but they also wanted to encourage participation among newcomers. So, they established an "open microphone" where anyone could speak. This created a new dilemma as the crowd grew, since new and unknown potential speakers might take the crowd "off-message" from standing with Muslim travelers. The dynamics of the growing size of that crowd became a source of anxiety for the leaders who feared that either intentionally malicious infiltrators or innocent participants with other interests might discredit their claim or even disrupt the protest event (Jasper 2015).

To resolve this dilemma, Cosecha leaders established strategies to manage risky speakers by using chants to re-focus the crowd. As Eliza explained about one unknown speaker, "its ok, because if she gets off-message, then we can start chanting." In this way, Cosecha organizers monitored the boundaries of the protest event's social space, and in particular, the messaging of the speakers. They made sure to "hold the microphone." This occurred several times and involved choosing who and when to pass the microphone to non-Cosecha speakers and responding to times speakers would go "off script." In such an unplanned event, Cosescha developed organizational strategies to reign in spontaneity.

Broadcasting the message

The protest represented those present in the airport in the physical sense, but a more distal audience watched the event through social media. Some of those who watched chose to spontaneously join the event in person or virtually. Social media provided Cosecha leaders with direct access to a public who followed the story over the night, and with the ability to help shape the narrative of events as they took place (Best 2021). As Naomi noted, during the live stream, Kathy

repeated messages like "we are in solidarity" calling for viewers to text were repeated directly to the public through social media platforms.

In addition to social media, professional news media acted as "secondary claimsmakers" to filter and shape the group's messages (Best 2021). As leaders of the protest, some television and print journalists did interview Cosecha leaders (Ramos and Ryan, 2017). Most, however, focused on politicians like Mayor Walsh and Senator Warren with little mention of the protest organizers (Arsenault 2017; Gambino 2017). Even though media reports presented politicians and protestors as a unified contenders to the Trump Administration's executive order, behind the scenes, groups jockeyed for influence.

Leveraging protest for legitimacy with powerful actors

The ability of this group to claim credit for this protest event depended upon successfully appropriating control of the protest event. Once they gained control of the crowd during this moment of the whirlwind, Cosecha leveraged the crowd to obtain standing and legitimacy in their negotiations with powerful actors, specifically (1) politicians, (2) police, (3) lawyers and (4) families to negotiate the end of the protest successfully.

Politicians and Principles

By 2017, many pundits considered Senator Elizabeth Warren to be a potential 2020 presidential candidate. A political ally shared the news with Cosecha leaders that the senator might arrive to speak at the protest event. Just before 8:00pm, Jorge sent a message to the group chat asking "Should we let her speaks or not? #breakingprinciples." On the one hand, they had established an open mic and invited anyone to speak.

On the other hand, by writing "#breaking principles," he reminded the group of Cosecha's fourth principle, "We don't dance with political parties." The principle means "we speak for ourselves." During the protest, as hundreds of people arrived, Cosecha leaders wrestled with a version of what Jasper (2015) called the "powerful allies" dilemma (Jasper 2015; Nicholls & Uitermark 2015). In this dilemma, players with more power (i.e., politicians) may ally with less powerful players (i.e., protestors) and, in the process, supplant the intended agenda of the contesting group. In this moment of the whirlwind, Cosecha made "on the fly" decisions to resolve this tension between the group's principles and the crowd's desire to hear from a popular politician.

When Senator Warren arrived, the crowd parted in a way that leaders later compared to Moses and the Red Sea. The senator took the megaphone and spoke for a little over two minutes describing the executive order as "illegal" and "unconstitutional." After Warren finished speaking, Francesca took action to resolve the tension between Warren's presence and Cosecha's principle. She took the megaphone back and stated:

> We don't dance with political parties. We came here and the politicians followed, because ultimately the power rests with us, and not with them.

By claiming rhetorical power of the moment and identifying us as the people and politicians as them, Franchesca established Cosecha's independence. Mari commented on people's reaction after Francesca's statement:

> I had been seeing the women who were crying and totally all-around Elizabeth Warren, and to stand up there I looked in their direction, (laughing) and people were like (perplexed facial expression) like why is she saying this? And then they realized, oh, that's why she is saying that. (laughing)

The reaffirmation of Cosecha's principles helped solidify their collective identity as independent from party politics. After Senator Warren spoke, other politicians spoke at the protest including Councilman Tito Jackson, Mayor Marty Walsh and Attorney General Maura Healy. After each speaker, the Cosecha members repeated the phrases, "we came here and the politicians followed" and "we don't dance with political parties." Cosecha leaders felt it was important to repeat this message through the live stream of the event on social media, and to translate this message from English to Spanish.

Police and control of the terminal space

As the protest began, Jorge and Bautista assumed the roles of police liaisons. As first, police did seem concerned about their presence, but as the crowd grew to over 100 people, police asked the group to move to a corner of the terminal. Cosecha leaders sought to claim space within the international terminal that would provide leverage for the protest. According to Jorge, "It was a battle of authority. (Smack sound) Who controls the airport?"

The protest occupied a space between the doors to the United States Customs and Border Patrol (USCBP) and the main exits to the terminal. Physical space can play an important role in contributing to many aspects of a contentious political protest event (Zhou 1998; Anisin 2016). The physical location of the protest in front of airport exits was strategic for mobilizing the public. Cosecha's improvised tactic of non-violent cooperation sought to disrupt everyday routines to acquire and assert power (Alinsky 1971).

In this case, Jorge and Bautista adopted a strategy of stalling to wait for more protestors to arrive. As Bautista explained, "when this gets bigger, they can't get us out." Cosecha's tactic relied upon leveraging their control of the growing crowd to prevent police for forcibly removing them. As a stalling tactic, the organizers "negotiated" with the police about where the crowd was allowed to stand, while trying to prevent the use of force that could disrupt the protest altogether. Jorge

and Bautista even went so far as to hide from police in the crowd while asking local politicians to intervene on their behalf.

Cosecha members estimated that their stalling tactics allowed the crowd to grow to over 2,000 people in the center of Logan Airport international terminal. Police locked the terminal entrance, so that if people stepped outside the terminal they could not reenter. In response, Cosecha organizers sent out a social media message to redirect people to other terminals and walk through the hallways that connected to the protest. Cosecha improvised on-the-fly tactics to delay and redirect crowds spontaneously, which they implemented through pre-existing organizational protocols and existing relationships. This improvised strategy seemed to work. By 8:15pm, Jorge reported, "Space taken over, this airport is ours."

Improvising new roles to support lawyers and families

The international terminal of Logan Airport contains one large set of opaque doors that separates arriving passengers passing through Immigration and Customs agents from waiting friends and family members. Even before the protest began, lawyers joined those waiting for Muslim travelers who had been detained. Lawyers saw each detained traveler as a potential case to challenge the executive order in court, so, they waited. But how could the lawyers identify the Muslim travelers?

Mari described how she identified the families who were waiting for the travelers:

> I would just sneak into groups of people. Like you could just see people's distress in their face...then I would talk to people near me, and they would be like, yeah, she is waiting for her husband. And I would wait for the reporters to leave and then I would approach her. I'm like, I'm an organizer with this protest and we are here for you. What do you need?

Mari improvised a strategy to just "sneak into the groups of people," suggests that she recognized that her behavior breached social norms of talking to strangers and eavesdropping. Despite this, Mari tried to establish her legitimacy as "an organizer of this protest." Once she had established contact with families, Mari found legal support for them by improvising to meet lawyers:

> I had zero relationships with the lawyer, so I felt like I needed to be her assistant so she would feed me information. So, I would be like, what do you need? Do you need water? (laughing) And she would be like "Actually, yes." And I would be like what do you need? And she was like, I need a pen and a pencil. and so, I stole Eliza's clipboard ...so that's how started knowing about the families.

Mari began working with lawyers by recognizing one of their basic human needs—thirst. In this simple act, she built trust with lawyers and appropriated resources (a clipboard) from her colleague (Eliza) that the lawyers needed. Mari's role evolved into becoming an "assistant" and liaison between lawyers and families.

Around this time shouts of celebration erupted from parts of the crowd. "What happened?" Francesca asked. Eliza announced, "A federal judge made an order to stay the executive order!" Earlier that day, USCBP prevented Hameed Khalid Darweesh, a former US Army translator with a valid visa from entering the US. ACLU lawyers brought the case to US District Court in New York, and the judge prohibited USCBP officials from blocking entry to any person with a legal visa. With this news, some protestors wanted to declare victory, but Mari reported that one family still waited for a Muslim traveler to be released.

Ending the protest

The remaining detained traveler refused to come out because she feared the press and attention. At the same time, Cosecha leaders did not want to end the protest before she departed. Mayor Marty Walsh and "his entourage" arrived on the scene and began negotiating with Jorge to end the protest. Jorge recounted the negotiation:

> I said, look mayor, we know there is a person inside. And we are a very organized group. We are the people here who are controlling the whole protest. So, once we get this woman released, we will make sure we all leave. And we'll make it peacefully.

In these unplanned negotiations, Jorge reaffirms their control over the crowd. His statement "we are a very organized group" establishes Cosecha's legitimacy with the Mayor and leveraged the crowd in his negotiation.

Jorge knew of the remaining traveler because Mari's work with lawyers and families. Meanwhile Mayor Walsh needed to confirm the existence of the remaining traveler since the City did not hold jurisdiction inside the airport. An aide asked Jorge how he knew about the family of the remaining traveler. Jorge looked the older white man in the eye and said, "because racially profiled them." The older man looked surprised but nodded.

Jorge and the Mayor Walsh agreed to a process for the last traveler to exit. The Mayor and the traveler would leave together surrounded by 20 police officers. Cosecha agreed to not announce her departure until she left but spontaneously applauded as she left. This improvised agreement with the Mayor allowed protestors to claim victory and peacefully end the protest. At 10:27pm Mari typed in the chat, "she is coming out," which she followed with (10:29pm), "she is out" and "claim victory and run!" Afterwards, the protestors celebrated with shouts of joy, hugs and tears. City officials arranged for empty buses to transport the crowd

away quickly, and Cosecha members celebrated on the group chat: "let's partyyy" and "We did it!" until the next day.

Discussion and conclusion

The case of Cosecha's tactical decisions to protest, control and leverage the Boston airport protest of President Trump's first 2017 Muslim Ban analyzes collective decision-making during a moment of the whirlwind protest event. The moment of the whirlwind metaphor provides analytic leverage for reconciling several aspects of the long-standing organization-spontaneity debates.

First, the case conceptually advances the moment of the whirlwind theory as a temporal phenomenon within an ecology of exogenous conditions to the protestors themselves. Much like a weather event, moments of the whirlwind emerge suddenly, promising an opportunity, as well as dangers. Moments of the whirlwind bring together large numbers of the public as participants and stakeholders that even experienced revolutionaries, movement leaders and community organizers may not be able to completely predict, but which they can recognize. Their emergence demands spontaneous decision making from protest leaders.

As the case shows, during such periods, routine rules of protest may be suspended to exploit new and temporary political opportunities. In this case, the executive order and a flurry of airport protests nationwide created momentum. So, even though past attempts to hold protests at Logan airport met with arrests and failure, this time was different.

Second, this case contributes to ongoing discussions of spontaneity in protest by dismantling the flawed binary between organization and spontaneity. During this protest, decision-making emerged from interactions between spontaneity and prior organizational commitments, or what Kruglanski (2024) called prefigurative protocols. In particular, the strategic decisions by the Cosecha organizers of the Boston airport protest of the Muslim Ban revolved around three stages: (1) deciding to protest, (2) appropriating and controlling the protest event, and (3) leveraging the protest during interactions with powerful stakeholders. Each of these sets of decisions relied on a combination of pre-existing organizational infrastructure and shared values, on the one hand, with a willingness to innovate and improvise based on changing and unpredicted circumstances, on the other hand.

Third, this case study challenges the false dichotomy that presents organizations as rational and spontaneity as irrational. Social movement actors make decisions 'on the fly,' not because they were 'triggered' to adopt automatic, mechanical responses but because a rapidly changing situation required members of a social movement organization to exercise strategic decisions, innovations, and tactical adaptations to new conditions. The case restores collective agency of protestors, whose discussion demonstrated considered, strategic and collective decisions in response to changing circumstance, during this protest events. As such, this case eschews the baggage that pathologizing and mechanical terms like "trigger

effects" can suggest. This case recognizes spontaneous decision making of protestors as rational, and the fluidity of organizational prefigurative commitments.

Importantly, there is also a risk of over-stating spontaneity and moments of the whirlwind. Not every protest event possesses the conditions for a moment of the whirlwind. Seasonal and recurring conditions provide opportunities for organizations to plan scripted large-scale events that include the participation of large numbers of people. Furthermore, groups that repeatedly seek spontaneous and rapid mobilizations may risk burnout among their members.

Still, this case study presents ways that pre-existing organizational norms do not invalidate spontaneous protest but, in some cases, prepare protest leaders to better recognize, navigate and leverage conditions of spontaneous protest. As Sifry (2025) notes, the return of Donald Trump to the white house in 2025 has already provoked new whirlwind moments, with wide ranging spontaneous protest responses with collectivist organizational cultures.

References

ACLU Washington 2017. *Muslim Ban Timeline*. Washington, DC: American Civil Liberties Union Washington. https://www.aclu-wa.org/pages/timeline-muslim-ban (Last retrieved: June 5, 2025)

Alinksy, Saul 1971. *Rules for Radicals*. New York: Random House, Inc.

Anisin, Alexei 2016. "Repression, Spontaneity, and Collective Action: The 2013 Turkish Gezi Protests." *Journal of Civil Society* 12(4):411-429.

Arsenault, Mark January 29, 2017. "Thousands in Copley Square Protest Immigration Order," *Boston Globe*. https://www.bostonglobe.com/metro/2017/01/29/protest/5zOAYFudUwDp8TF4ZnYs5O/story.html (Last retrieved: June 5, 2025).

Bell, Derrick 1968. "Columbia and the New Left." *The Public Interest* 13:61-101.

Best, Joel 2021. *Social Problems, 4th Edition*. New York, NY: Norton Publishing.

Bevins, Vincent 2023. *If We Burn: The Mass Protest Decade and the Missing Revolution*. New York: Hachette Book Group.

Boston Globe January 30, 2017. "Chaos Follows Trump Immigration Edict. A Timeline of Trump's Immigration Ban." *The Boston Globe*. https://apps.bostonglobe.com/news/nation/graphics/2017/01/travel-ban/ (Last accessed: June 5, 2025).

Brown, adrienne maree 2017. *Emergent Strategy: Shaping Change, Changing Worlds*. Chico, CA: AK Press.

Cash, Conor, Craig Hughes and Kevin Van Meter for Team Colors Collective 2008. "Of Whirlwinds: Metaphors, Purpose, Intersections, Acknowledgements, Background and Dedication." *In the Middle of a Whirlwind: 2008 Convention*

Protests, Movement and Movements:. New York, NY: The Journal of Aesthetics and Protest Press. https://www.joaap.org/projects/whirlwind.htm (Last retrieved on June 5, 2025).

Chen, Miaofen 2015. "From Class to Freedom – Rosa Luxemburg on Revolutionary Spontaneity and Socialist Democracy." *ARSP: Archiv Für Rechts-Und Sozialphilosophie / Archives for Philosophy of Law and Social Philosophy* 101, no. 1: 75–86. http://www.jstor.org/stable/24756731. (Last retrieved: June 5, 2025).

Cheng, Edmund W., and Wai-Yin Chan 2017. "Explaining Spontaneous Occupation: Antecedents, Contingencies and Spaces in the Umbrella Movement." *Social Movement Studies* 16(2): 222–239.

Collingwood, Loren, Nazita Lajevardi, and Kasha A.R. Oskooii 2018. "A Change of Heart? Why Individual-Level Public Opinion Shifted Against Trump's 'Muslim Ban." *Political Behavior* 40(4):1035–72.

Cosecha 2015. *Cosescha Principles*. www.lahuelga.com/principles (Last retrieved: June 5, 2025.)

Dlugach, Tamara B. 2012. "Is it Necessary to Ponder Marx Today?" *Russian Studies in Philosophy* 51(2):83-98.

Engler, Mark, and Paul Engler 2016. *This Is An Uprising: How Nonviolent Revolt Is Shaping the Twenty-First Century*. New York, NY: Nation Books.

Flesher Fominaya, Cristina 2015. "Debunking Spontaneity: Spain's 15-M/ *Indignados* as Autonomous Movement." *Social Movement Studies* 14(2): 142–163.

Gambino, Lauren and Sabrina Siddiqui, Paul Owen and Edward Helmore January 29, 2017. "Thousands protest against Trump travel ban in cities and airports nationwide." *The Guardian*. https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2017/jan/29/protest-trump-travel-ban-muslims-airports (Last retrieved on June 5, 2025).

Hersher, Rebecca February 3, 2017. "Federal Judge Stays Trump Travel Order, But Many Visas Already Revoked." *The Two-Way National Public Radio*. https://www.npr.org/sections/thetwo-way/2017/02/03/513306413/state-department-says-fewer-than-60-000-visas-revoked-under-travel-order. (Last retrieved on June 5, 2025).

Ho, Ming-Sho 2018. "From Mobilization to Improvisation: The Lessons from the 2014 Sunflower Movement." *Social Movement Studies* 17(2): 189–202.

Holst, John D. 2011 "Frameworks for understanding the politics of social movements." *Studies in the Education of Adults* 43(2):117-127.

Holst, John D. 2009. "The Revolutionary Party in Gramsci's Pre-Prison Educational and Political Theory and Practice." *Educational Philosophy and Theory* 41(6):622-639.

Hughes, Craig, Stevie Peace and Kevin Van Meter for the Team Colors Collective. 2010. *Uses of a Whirlwind: Movement, Movements and Contemporary Radical Currents in the United States*. Oakland, CA: AK Press.

Jabola-Carolus, Isaac, Luke Elliott-Negri, James M. Jasper, Jessica Mahlbacher, Manés Weisskircher, and Anna Zhelnina 2020. "Strategic Interaction Sequences: The Institutionalization of Participatory Budgeting in New York City." *Social Movement Studies* 19(5/6):640–656.

Jasper, James M. 2015. "Introduction: Playing the Game." Pgs. 9-34 in J. M. Jasper & J. W. Duyvendak (Eds), *Players and Arenas: The Interactive Dynamics of Protest*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.

Killian, Lewis M. 1984. "Organization, Rationality and Spontaneity in the Civil Rights Movement." *American Sociological Review* 49(6): 770.

Kruglanski, Aviv 2024. "Spontaneity and the Prefigurative Feel." *Ephemera: Theory and Poitics in Organization.* 24(1):1473-2866.

Leferman, Alexander 2023. "Joint Action and Spontaneity." *European Journal of Philosophy*. 2025;33:167-182.

Mahoney, James 2000. Path Dependence in Historical Sociology. *Theory and Society* 29(4):507-548.

Marx, Karl and Friedrich Engels 1848/1996. *The Communist Manifesto*. London; Chicago, IL: Pluto Press.

McAdam, Doug 1999. *Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency, 1930-1970, Second Edition*. 2nd ed. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press.

Morris, Aldon 1981. "Black Southern Student Sit-in Movement: An Analysis of Internal Organization." *American Sociological Review* 46(6):744-767.

Moyer, Bill 2001. *Doing Democracy: The MAP Model for Organizing Social Movements*. 4th ed. Gabriola Island, BC, Canada: New Society Publishers.

Nicholls, Walter J., and Justus Uitermark 2021. "A Virtuous Nation and Its Deserving Immigrants. How the Immigrant Rights Movement Embraced Nationalism." *Social Movement Studies* 20(4): 381–98.

Över, Defne and Başak Taraktaş. 2017. "When Does Repression Trigger Mass Protest? The 2013 Gezi Protests." *Research in Social Movements, Conflicts & Change*: 205–39.

Pilati, Katia, Giuseppe Acconcia, David Leone Suber and Henda Chennaoui. 2019. "Between Organization and Spontaneity of Protests: The 2010−2011 Tunisian and Egyptian Uprisings." *Social Movement Studies* 18(4): 463–81. doi:10.1080/14742837.2019.1567322.

Polletta, Francesca. 2006. *It Was Like A Fever: Storytelling in Protest and Politics*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Ramos, Nestor and Andrew Ryan. January 29, 2017. "Special Report: After the Stroke of Trump's Pen, a Dramatic 34 Hours." The Boston Globe. https://www.bostonglobe.com/metro/2017/01/29/narrative/zU2X61MVP8J4I vGP8zu1hM/story.html (Last retrieved June 5, 2025).

Roesch, Jennifer. September 2012. "Spontaneity and organization." *International Socialist Review*. #85. https://isreview.org/issue/85/spontaneity-and-organization/ (Last retrieved April 30, 2025).

Ryan, Charlotte, Karen Jeffreys, Taylor Ellowitz, and Jim Ryczek. 2013. "Chapter 7. Walk, Talk, Fax, or Tweet: Reconstructing Media-Movement Interactions through Group History Telling." Pp.133-158 In *Mediation and Protest Movements* edited by Burt Cammaerts, Alice Mattoni, and Patrick McCurdy (Eds).Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press.

Ryan, Charlotte, Karen Jeffreys, Jim Ryczek, Megan Smith, and Sam Howard 2016. *Remembering from Below: Integrating Media and Communication Technologies in Social Movement Histories*. Providence, RI: Rhode Island Coalition for the Homeless.

Saavedra, Carlos July 24, 2018. "This Is An Uprising: Moments Of The Whirlwind" *MassCommons*. https://masscommons.wordpress.com/2018/07/24/this-is-an-uprising-moments-of-the-whirlwind/ (Last retrieved June 5, 2025).

Sifry, Micah L. February 25, 2025. "Organizing How-Tos (and How Not-Tos) in this Whirlwind Moment." *The Connector*. https://theconnector.substack.com/p/organizing-how-tos-and-how-not-tos?utm_source=publication-search. (Last retrieved May 3, 2025).

Sifry, Micah L. May 28, 2021. Organizing During Whirlwind Moments. The Connector.: https://theconnector.substack.com/p/organizing-during-whirlwind-moments?utm_source=publication-search. (Last retrieved 3 May , 2025).

Snow, David A. and Dana M. Moss 2014. "Protest on the Fly: Toward a Theory of Spontaneity in the Dynamics of Protest and Social Movements." *American Sociological Review* 79(6): 1122–43.

Trump, Donald J. February 1, 2017. *Executive Order 13769 of January 27, 2017. Protecting the Nation from Foreign Terrorist Entry into the United States*. *Federal Register* Volume 82, Issue 20. Washington, DC: Published National Archives and Records Administration: 8977-8982.

Zhou, Dingxin 1998. "Ecologies of Social Movements: Student Mobilization during the 1989 Prodemocracy Movement in Beijing." *American Journal of Sociology* 103(6): 1493–1529.

Acknowledgements

About the author

Thomas Piñeros Shields, Ph.D. is an Associate Professor in Politics, Policy and International Relations (PPIR) and Director of the North Shore Policy Lab at Salem State University. His scholarship focuses on the intersection of contentious social movements and public policy. Dr. Piñeros Shields earned his doctorate in Social Policy and Sociology from Brandeis University in 2014 where he wrote is dissertation, *DREAMers Rising: Constituting the Undocumented Student Immigrant Movement*. He has over thirty-years experience with community based participatory action research and pedagogical projects alongside marginalized groups to dismantle barriers of race, class, ethnicity, language and legal statuses in New York City, Boston, East St. Louis, and several small Massachusetts cities. Contact: thomas.pinerosshields@salemstate.edu.
ORCID ID: 0000-0002-4367-6188