Conflict and local immigration policy making
How conflict over immigrant day laborers in the United States shapes local policy responses
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CHAPTER 6

Contentious Immigration Politics in a Multijurisdictional Field
A Case Study of Orange County, California

How do multijurisdictional political fields impact the strategies of pro- and anti-immigrant advocates? The geographical literature on immigration demonstrates that immigration policy in the United States has become decentralized, federalized, and fragmented. However, scholars studying immigration politics and activism continue to conceptualize mobilizations as unfolding within jurisdictional containers. This paper examines how advocates on both sides of the issue develop strategies in response to multiple entangled jurisdictions. It does so through a case study of contentious immigration politics in Orange County, California during the 2010s. The paper maintains that a multijurisdictional field distributes political opportunities unevenly to opposing advocates. How advocates respond to these opportunities depends on the distribution of resources to each side across this complex political space. The combination of political opportunities and resources determine the strategies that pro- and anti-immigrant advocates pursue. The paper derives its data from regional newspapers and employs a “claims analysis” to analyze waves of mobilization, actors, attitudes, locations, and strategies (Koopmans and Statham 1999). The paper shows that advocates on both sides were not contained within single jurisdictional walls. Instead, they developed complex geographical strategies that sought to exploit opportunities in friendly jurisdictions to combat threats from unfriendly jurisdictions.

Introduction

Soon after the election of Donald Trump, pro-immigrant advocates mobilized in the Orange County city of Santa Ana to pass a sanctuary city ordinance. After the passage of the ordinance, activists protested federal anti-immigration policies and advocated for a statewide sanctuary law in California. California’s SB54, or the Values Act, reflected a new generation of sanctuary laws designed to restrict state and local cooperation with federal law enforcement in immigration matters. The state law posed an important challenge to Trump’s anti-immigration initiative. It was also an affront to many conservative activists and local elected officials throughout the state, and especially those in Orange County. In response to the passage of SB54, elected officials and activists in Los Alamitos launched an effort to opt out of it. Other suburban municipalities followed suit, with some signing an amicus brief for a Justice Department lawsuit and others suing for an exemption from SB54. Orange County had become ground zero of the country’s contentious immigration politics. Whereas pro-immigrant advocates pressed the city of Santa Ana and California to use their authority to resist the Trump administration, anti-immigrant advocates sought to use the authority of municipalities to resist California and align with a nativist federal
government. These mobilizations unfolded across municipalities and levels of government, with advocates seeking to maximize advantages in particular jurisdictions to counter their adversaries and advance their positioning within the broad field of immigration politics.

The recent scholarship on subnational immigration politics provides important insights into the mobilizations that unfolded in Orange County. Scholars have shown that advocates within subnational jurisdictions have become much more important in shaping the country’s immigration policy (Varsanyi 2008a, 2011, 2014; Walker and Leitner 2011; Coleman 2012; Strunk and Leitner 2014; Gulasekaram and Ramakrishnan 2015; Provine et al. 2016; Caponio and Jones-Correa 2018). The federal government has devolved certain powers to subnational jurisdictions and enjoined others to participate in campaigns to detect, detain, and deport undocumented immigrants. In response to increased autonomy and discretion, elected officials in subnational jurisdictions have pursued policies in response to the demographic and political attributes in their specific jurisdictions. These policies have, in certain instances, varied sharply from one another, resulting in what Provine and her colleagues have called a “multijurisdictional policy patchwork” (Provine et al. 2016). Within this patchwork, other scholars have shown how activists — rather than elected officials — have mobilized to pursue their goals (Martinez 2008; Cordero-Guzmán et al. 2008; Gonzales 2014; Pallares 2014; Steil and Vasi 2014; Nicholls and Uitermark 2016; Burciaga and Martinez 2017; Zepeda-Millán 2017). Activists develop strategies in response to the “political opportunities” and resources (e.g., money, knowledge, networks, etc.) found in their jurisdictions.

The insights drawn from this literature are largely consistent with what we find in the Orange County case. However, our case also reveals two important features not addressed in this literature. First, advocates in Orange County were not only responding to constituents and opportunities in their specific jurisdictions. Instead, both sides identified friendly jurisdictions and assessed how these jurisdictions could be used to advance their general position within the field of immigration. Advocates on both sides looked to the multijurisdictional field, rather than a single jurisdiction, to advance their goals. Second, the literature mostly focuses on one side of immigrant mobilizations. This case reveals that “movement-countermovement” dynamics propel advocates into battles across various jurisdictions (Zald 1979; Meyer and Staggenborg, 1996; Lind and Stepan-Norris, 2011; Laschever and Meyer 2021). Thus, through the case of Orange County, our aim is to reveal the multijurisdictional character of these political battles and the importance of movement-countermovement dynamics in propelling them. To these ends, we ask: What is the form of this multijurisdictional field? What are the political forces constituting both sides of this political battle? And what strategies have they developed within this field?

Though this paper focuses on the case of immigrant rights activism, its findings concerning multijurisdictional fields are applicable to a broad range of mobilizations. For instance, environmental mobilizations often shift quickly across a range of jurisdictions, including the municipalities within a metropolitan region, the state, and different agencies of the federal government (McAdam and Boudet 2012; Wright and Boudet 2012; Dokshin 2015). Similarly, contentious struggles to desegregate schools certainly began at the level of local school districts, but they quickly ricocheted across a complex jurisdictional field that included the state government as well as the executive and judicial branches of the federal government (Olzak et al. 1994).
A multijurisdictional field: Uneven opportunities and resources

The geography of immigration politics

From the 1990s onwards, the federal government instituted a series of measures that devolved more immigration powers and resources to state, county and municipal governments (Varsanyi 2008a, 2011, 2014; Walker and Leitner 2011; Coleman 2012; Strunk and Leitner 2014; Gulasekaram and Ramakrishnan 2015; De Graauw 2016; Provine et al. 2016; Caponio and Jones-Correa 2018). State governments were encouraged to develop policies for social services, education, and law enforcement. Municipalities and counties were expected to participate more directly in the enforcement of immigration law and the detention of immigrants. Subnational participation in the political process has generated a patchwork of policies. Provine and her colleagues have called this fragmented system of governance a “multijurisdictional policy patchwork” (Provine et al. 2016: 41). Such a patchwork can result in sharp variations between like jurisdictions (e.g., states) and across jurisdictional levels (e.g., municipality, county, state, federal government).

Within this context, subnational elected officials used their newfound authorities to craft policies (Walker and Leitner 2011; Provine et al. 2016; Armenta 2017). Scholars have shown that elected officials have largely developed policies that reflect the specific demographic and ideological characteristics of their residents. For instance, Ramakrishnan and Wong (2010) maintain that elected officials in predominantly Republican jurisdictions support more restrictive measures. Similarly, Walker and Leitner maintain that “communities that value and respect cultural and racial diversity in their jurisdiction … are more likely to reject anti-immigration ordinances……” (2011: 158). In addition to ideology and partisanship, municipalities experiencing a sharp growth of immigrants are more likely to introduce restrictive policies. Lastly, Newman adds that candidates in heavily Republican jurisdictions have been encouraged to embrace hardline anti-immigrant platforms because such positions distinguish them from their competitors in crowded electoral fields (Newman 2013). These accounts suggest that factors endogenous to specific jurisdictions (e.g., ideology, party preferences, demographic change) have largely driven elected officials to pursue restrictive or accommodating immigration policies.

Scholars studying immigrant activism recognize the multilevel character of this political field, but many continue to focus on political battles unfolding within a single jurisdiction; primarily the municipality (Cordero-Guzmánetal. 2008; Martinez 2008; Steil and Vasi 2014; Gonzales 2014; Pallares 2014; Nicholls and Uitermark 2016; Burciaga and Martinez 2017; Zepeda-Millán 2017). For instance, Nicholls and Uitermark (2016) have argued that cities foster strong-tie relations among diverse activist organizations, which in turn create a potent organizational infrastructure for pro-immigrant campaigns. The accumulation of resources, organizational capabilities, and networks within a municipality improves the ability of activists to achieve their policy and political goals (Gonzales 2014). Other scholars have focused on the political opportunities provided by cities. Burciaga and Martinez (2017), for instance, introduce the concept of “localized political context” and argue that it impacts the claims, strategies, and targets of immigrant rights activists. They argue that “the devolution of immigration law and policy to localities not only influences the incorporation of undocumented young adults, but also creates barriers and openings for change through mobilization” (2017: 455). The opportunities and constraints presented within distinctive jurisdictional contexts shapes the strategies pursued by activists.
The literature also shows how the pursuit of policies in one jurisdiction can generate conflicts with the policies enacted in another jurisdiction. Scholars studying Hazleton, Pennsylvania, for instance, highlight how demographic change and a culturally conservative electorate provided the mayor and his allies an opportunity to mount anti-immigrant campaigns (Steiland Ridgley 2012; Longazel 2016). The resulting policy brought the city into a jurisdictional conflict with the federal government. A court ruled that federal immigration law preempted Hazleton ordinance and that it was in violation of the Equal Protection Clause of the 14th amendment. In another example, the comparatively accommodating city of Mesa, Arizona had repeated jurisdictional conflicts with the restrictions of the Sheriff’s Department of Maricopa County (Provine et. al. 2016). The literature therefore tends to present these inter-jurisdictional mobilizations as one-off, tit-for-tat conflicts between several jurisdictions rather than permanent features of a multijurisdictional field.

In sum, the literature has shown the immigration policy has become geographically very complex. We learn that multiple, entangled jurisdictions are responsible for generating immigration policy and that advocates – elected officials as well as activists – respond to the political conditions and opportunities within this field. However, the literature largely focuses on how advocates on one side of the issue largely respond to the opportunities and constraints within their specific jurisdictions.

**Geography of activism in a multijurisdictional field**

Geographers have long shown that social movements unfold across space and within a multilevel governance context (Miller 2000; Cox 2002; Herod and Wright 2002; Sikkink 2005; Varsanyi 2011; Tarrow and McAdam 2017; Routledge 2017). The uneven distribution of opportunities and threats induces activists to shift geographical scales in search of greater political support. Activists maximize opportunities when they can “jump scale” and target opportune jurisdictions to advance their cause (Cox 2002; Sikkink 2005; Routledge 2017). This can create complex activist relations that stretch across space and jurisdictions. For instance, in her study of human rights activism, Sikkink (2005) showed that activists in a repressive country with few political opportunities developed relations with activists in several friendly countries and in international institutions. They used these relations to pressure friendly countries and institutions to exert pressure on their primary political targets through court rulings and sanctions. Human rights activists had a primary jurisdictional target (their national state), but their field of political action was complex and involved multiple jurisdictions at different geographical scales. They were not contained within a single jurisdiction and reacting to adjacent jurisdictions in a tic-for-tac manner.

Relational interactions between opposing movements can serve as a propulsive force in multijurisdictional battles. Social movement scholars have argued social movements often trigger the formation of oppositional social movements, triggering important interactions between the two sides (Zald 1979; Zald and Useem 1987; Meyer and Staggenborg, 1996; Lind and Stepan-Norris, 2011; Laschever and Meyer 2021). For instance, the pro-choice movement evolved through its antagonistic relation with the anti-abortion movement, with both sides competing against one another to maximize their power across varying jurisdictions. Movement-countermovement dynamics impact both how elected officials respond to movements (i.e., support or hostility) and
the strategies activists develop on both sides to respond to political opportunities. Importantly, Meyer and Staggenborg (1996) add that the structure of the state (unitary versus federal) affects whether movement-countermovement dynamics take hold:

In a federal state like the United States, political authority is divided, both among branches of government and among national and subnational governments, so that policy advocates on both sides of an issue are likely to encounter a mixture of governmental support and opposition from different levels and branches of government. Additional levels of government provide political allies to aid mobilization and venues in which to press claims (1996: 1637).

In fragmented and federalized systems, competing advocates may face hostility in certain jurisdictions but opportunities in others. Such a context encourages both sides to maximize opportunities in favorable contexts to countermand the advantages of their opponents in other jurisdictions. Lastly, Laschever and Meyer maintain that whether opposing sides can sustain themselves over time depends on their possession of key resources, including “human and material resources, organizational infrastructure, or leadership capacity” (2021: 1). When both sides have comparable opportunities and resources within a political field, they can mount robust mobilizations across government jurisdictions.

In sum, we argue that advocates on both sides of immigration battles are not only responding to the endogenous factors (e.g., political opportunities, voter preferences and demographics, resources, etc.) within their single jurisdictions. Immigration politics are oftentimes propelled by adversaries and unfold across multijurisdictional field. Large metropolitan areas like Southern California consist of a patchwork of entangled jurisdictions, which presents advocates on both sides with a complex array of constraints and opportunities. Opposing sides deploy their different of resources to maximize positioning across the jurisdictions that constitute their common political field.

**Methods**

As is the convention with much social movement research, this paper relies mostly on newspaper articles as the main data source. To obtain the articles NexisUni has been deployed. NexisUni is a database that provides access to newspaper archives, among others. The database of NexisUni was searched for articles on immigration and sanctuary issues that can be linked to municipalities in Orange County, CA, or to Orange County, CA. Articles that were published in English between 2010 and 2018 were included in our dataset.

Newspapers published in other languages than English are beyond the scope of this research. English-language media and media publishing in other languages can differ, when it comes to the amount of coverage and content of certain topics, such as immigration (Branton and Dunaway 2008). As this research combines newspaper data published in English with city council minutes to identify actors involved in mobilizations in Orange County, the researchers are confident that the data provides a comprehensive overview of mobilization around immigration in
Orange County. However, future research could explore if English-language media and other-language media differ in their coverage of mobilizations.

No relevant articles on the topics of immigration and/or sanctuary were found for the municipalities of Dana Point, Irvine, La Palma, Laguna Hills, Laguna Woods and Seal Beach. The search yielded a total of 262 newspaper articles, that were published in 19 different newspapers. A majority of the newspaper articles included in the dataset was published by the Orange County Register (61.8 percent), which can be typified as a right leaning newspaper. Of the other newspapers included, 30.9 percent can be classified as center oriented and 7.3 percent as leaning left. The newspaper articles have been used to construct two different datasets.

The first dataset focuses on claims made by actors in newspaper articles. Based on the political claims analysis method (Koopmans and Statham 1999) all statements that relate to immigration or sanctuary issues made by actors in newspaper articles have been defined as claims. This approach has resulted in a dataset that consists of 1,751 claims. Each claim has been coded as negative (-1), neutral (0), or positive (1) towards immigration. An attitude score represents the average of the sum of all coded claims or mobilization activities for a certain actor or group of actors. For instance, if an actor made ten claims, of which seven were scored as positive (1) and three were coded as negative (-1), the attitude score of this actor is (1*7)+(-1*3))/10 = .4. In addition, the number of newspaper articles an actor or group of actors appeared in is deployed to illustrate how prominent an actor or group of actors has been in the local immigration debate in Orange County, CA.

A claim has been coded as negative when an actor expresses hostility towards immigration and/or when an actor expresses the desire to exclude immigrants. A claim has been coded as positive when an actor expresses favorable feelings towards immigrants and/or expresses the intention to include immigrants. A claim has been coded as neutral when the actor does not express either negative or positive feelings towards immigrants and/or does not state an intention to either include or exclude immigrants. It can be argued that people can express different degrees of support or opposition to immigrants. For instance, one supporter of immigration may support a combination of increased border control with more humane immigration laws, while another supporter of immigration solely supports amnesty. It may be argued then that the latter person is ‘more positive’ towards immigration than the first person. However, we have chosen to assign both cases a similar score of 1, as it is beyond the scope of this research to determine a meaningful quantitative difference between categories of support of or opposition to immigration. It would be interesting for further research to explore the degrees of support of and opposition to immigration.

The second dataset focuses on immigration related activism in Orange County, CA. Newspaper articles were coded for the following instances of activism:

1) Individual activities: action by individuals that aim to impact immigration related policies. Examples are speaking at (council) meetings and sending letters.
2) Collective activities: action that is collective and aims to impact immigration related policies. Examples include workshops, forums, mailings, demonstrations, fasts, meetings, legal support, press conferences, lawsuits, rallies, trainings, and petitions.
3) Government activities: action in which government actors engage with citizens, organizations or businesses (Verhoeven and Duyvendak 2017) with the aim to alter immigration related policies. Examples are pushing alternative policies, filing motions,
including grievances into electoral campaigns, media appearances, lobbying and
townhalls.

Similar to claims, the instances of activism were coded as being negative (-1), neutral (0), or positive
(1) towards immigration.

An advantage of the political claims analysis approach is that all relevant institutional and
noninstitutional actors are included (Koopmans and Statham 1999), which is essential to get an
understanding of pro- and anti-immigration activism in Orange County, CA (McAdam and
Boudet 2012). However, the use of newspaper data is also criticized as newspaper articles in
practice often fall short of meeting the journalistic norms of balance and diversity (Hagen 1993).
In general journalists tend to publish more claims and activities that have viewpoints that are in
line with the editorial line of the newspaper (Hagen 1993). We address this bias by including
multiple newspapers. By including multiple newspapers and based on results of previous research
that has found that journalist objectively report the content of claims made by actors, we can argue
that our dataset provides an accurate overview of pro- and anti-immigration activism in Orange
County, CA (Hagen 1993; Heibling and Tresch 2011).

The newspaper data has been supplemented with contextual data on demographics and
political partisanship to provide an overview of the context in which activists in Orange County,
CA, operate. The supplemental data has been gathered for all 34 cities in Orange County, CA, that
are included in the decennial Census of 2010. Demographic data on the population, educational
attainment, homeownership, and income were obtained from the decennial Census and the
American Community Survey. Data on city-level election results during Presidential elections
were obtained from the California Secretary of State. Voting results from Presidential elections
at the city level were used as a proxy to measure political partisanship at the municipal level. Lastly,
we employ 990-tax filings for nonprofit organizations with 501(c)3 status to assess the financial
resources of pro- and anti-immigrant organizations.

The contentious immigration politics of Orange County

Orange County has historically been an important center of the US conservative movement. A
dense cluster of right-wing organizations formed in the county, including the John Birch Society,
Crusaders Against Communists, alongside renowned evangelical Christian organizations (McGirr
2001). In 1993, Republican activists in the Orange County municipality of Yorba Linda launched
a successful campaign for a referendum that would impose major restrictions on undocumented
immigrants (Jacobson 2008). Though Proposition 187 was struck down by the courts, it provided
other states and localities a template to pursue their own anti-immigrant laws.

Important demographic and political trends have changed the conditions of conservative
activism (see, Tables 6.1 and 6.2). The county had historically been predominantly white and
conservative. The Latino population had long been confined to two cities in the northern part of
the county: Santa Ana and Anaheim. The Asian population was clustered mostly in the north
Orange County municipalities such as Westminster, Garden Grove, and Fullerton. The Black
population was very low and had no significant geographical clustering.

Since 2000, there have been important demographic changes. At a general level, the share
of the Latino population increased by 10.6 percent, the share of the Asian population increased by
47.4 percent, and the share of the White population decreased by 20.4 percent. These county-level
color changes helped bolster the percentage of Latino and Asian residents outside traditional municipal
strongholds. In 2018, 11.8 percent of the cities in Orange County were at or near majority Latino
(more than 45 percent), 29.4 percent had a large Latino population (between 25 and 45 percent),
41.2 percent had a sizable population (between 15 and 25 percent), and 17.6 percent had a smaller
Latino population (less than 15 percent). For the Asian population, 5.9 percent of cities were at or
near majority Asian (more than 45 percent), 17.7 percent had a large Asian population (between
25 and 45 percent), 23.5 percent had a sizable population (between 15 and 25 percent), and 52.9
percent of Orange County municipalities had a smaller Asian population (less than 15 percent).
The percentage of cities with a White population at or near majority (more than 45 percent)
decreased from 73.5 percent in 2000 to 58.8 percent in 2018. Municipalities in affluent south
Orange County have remained predominantly White while many in north Orange County have
become significantly less White over the past 20 years (see, Figure 6.1).

There was also a change in partisanship. In 1990 the Republican Party had a 22 percent
registration advantage. That advantage had shrunk to .7 percent in 2019 (Chapman College
Survey 2019). In the 2000 presidential election, 55 percent of county residents supported the
Republican candidate. Santa Ana was and continues to be the county’s most important
Democratic stronghold. By 2016, support for the Republican presidential candidate dropped to
43 percent. This was substantially lower than the 2000 county vote but also higher than the 32
percent statewide vote for candidate Trump. Trump received majority support in 26.5% of Orange
County cities, and between 40 to 50% support in 41.2% of municipalities (see, Table 6.2). Thus,
demographic and partisanship trends suggest that conservative hegemony is weakening but there
remain important bastions of conservative support throughout the county.

Table 6.1: Share of population by race/ethnicity in cities in Orange County²

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2000</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2018</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Latino population</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 45%</td>
<td>11.8%</td>
<td>11.8%</td>
<td>11.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between 25 and 45%</td>
<td>23.5%</td>
<td>23.5%</td>
<td>29.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between 15 and 25%</td>
<td>23.5%</td>
<td>38.2%</td>
<td>41.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than 15%</td>
<td>41.2%</td>
<td>26.5%</td>
<td>17.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>White population</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 45%</td>
<td>73.5%</td>
<td>64.7%</td>
<td>58.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between 25 and 45%</td>
<td>23.5%</td>
<td>26.4%</td>
<td>23.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between 15 and 25%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>5.9%</td>
<td>14.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than 15%</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Contentious immigration politics in a multijurisdictional field

### Asian population

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Less than 15%</th>
<th>Between 15 and 25%</th>
<th>Between 25 and 45%</th>
<th>More than 45%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>73.5%</td>
<td>11.8%</td>
<td>14.7%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Black population

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Less than 15%</th>
<th>Between 15 and 25%</th>
<th>Between 25 and 45%</th>
<th>More than 45%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 6.1: Population of white residents in Orange County

![Maps showing population distribution](image-url)
In this context, both pro- and anti-immigrant activists could garner some support for their causes. These two forces battled each other in a series of mobilizations. Based on the number of claims made in the newspaper database, we identify several waves of anti- and pro-immigrant activism during the last decade (see, Figure 6.2). These mobilizations were responses to Arizona’s restrictive immigration law, federal government proposals to pass a comprehensive immigration reform bill, federal government enforcement measures, and the California’s Value Act (SB54). “Other” battles included local disputes concerning day laborers, street vendors, and similar matters. These mobilizations also consisted of distinctive activities including attending council meetings, sending mailings, organizing workshops, lobbying elected officials, and organizing public protests. Anti-immigrant groups accounted for 82 separate activities and pro-immigrant groups accounted for 118 (see, Table 6.4).

Figure 6.2: Immigration protest waves in Orange County based on claims
Uneven political opportunities within a multijurisdictional field

Pro- and anti-immigrant mobilizations unfolded within a multijurisdictional political field that included 34 municipalities, county supervisors, the county sheriff, state officials, and various agencies and branches of the federal government. Public officials in these jurisdictions had different ideologies, political aspirations, and faced varying political, bureaucratic, and ideological pressures. Such differences resulted in a wide array of attitudes regarding immigration. Table 6.3 assesses the attitudes of public officials by using statements made in newspapers and their levels of engagement as indicated by the number of articles they appeared in.

Table 6.3: Government officials’ attitudes by policy initiatives, 2010-2018

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Attitude on immigration</th>
<th>Number of articles claim-makers appeared in</th>
<th>Policy Initiatives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Federal</td>
<td>-0.23</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State</td>
<td>0.26</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>County</td>
<td>-0.29</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City</td>
<td>-0.17</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judiciary</td>
<td>0.31</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Municipal officials were the most vocal in the immigration debate and largely held negative attitudes on the issue of immigration (see, Table 6.3). We also assess the attitudes of municipal officials across the county and their level of public engagement with the issue (see, Figure 6.3). The attitudes of municipal officials ranged from strongly anti-immigrant to moderately pro-immigrant, and there are important variations in levels of engagement (measured by the number of immigration-related policy initiatives enacted). In whiter and more Republican south Orange County, attitudes are more uniformly anti-immigrant. North Orange County is more uneven because it has experienced important rates of demographic and political change. Santa Ana city officials were the most vocal in the county and expressed the strongest support for immigrants. Anaheim’s officials have also provided some political support for immigrants. These two cities were surrounded by several others with elected officials who were active in expressing their support for the anti-immigrant cause. Certain officials in Orange, Villa Park, Huntington Beach, Los Alamitos, Costa Mesa, among others remained committed nativists and supported the anti-immigrant cause. Given the continued prominence of White Trump voters in many Orange County municipalities, the conservative positioning of municipal officials is not surprising.
County-level officials were also heavily involved in immigration issues and held restrictive attitudes (see, Table 6.3). Among county officials, those with the Orange County Sheriff’s Department (OCDT) were the most vocal and antagonistic to pro-immigrant reforms. The negative attitude towards immigrants reflected both political and instrumental concern. The sheriff is an elected position and maintaining a hardline on immigration has been shown to be popular in historically conservative counties (Provine et al. 2016; Armenta 2017). Moreover, the Sheriff’s Department had established strong relations with ICE and benefited financially from leasing jailing facilities to the federal government. In addition to the Sheriff’s Department, most of the Orange County Board of Supervisors took hardline positions on immigration.

Though many municipal and county officials endorsed anti-immigrant positions, state officials were generally more supportive of immigrants (see, Table 6.3) but less vocal than municipal and county officials. State Senators expressed strong support for immigrants. Democratic Senate leaders made a concerted effort to defend sanctuary laws against campaigns by Orange County-based activists and officials. The strong support by state senators for pro-immigration policy contrasted sharply with the largely negative position of Orange County-based representatives within the state Assembly (i.e., the lower house of the state legislature).

Officials from the federal government were a prominent voice in Orange County’s immigration battles and largely took a negative position (see, Table 6.3). The most important federal officials were those associated with Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). ICE contracted local jail space and had partnerships with several local police agencies and the Orange...
County Sheriff Department. ICE officials viewed state and municipal efforts to restrict cooperation with law enforcement as a threat to their operations in the region. They consequently became involved in local debates concerning detentions and deportations. The second most vocal federal officials were members of the House of Representatives. Until 2018, four out of seven of Orange County’s congressional delegation were Republican. Congressperson Loretta Sanchez from Santa Ana was a vocal supporter of pro-immigrant efforts, and Dana Rohrabacher of Huntington Beach was committed to the nativist cause. The third most vocal federal body to intervene in Orange County battles was the Trump White House, which not surprisingly expressed a strong position against immigrants. Thus, anti-immigrant forces enjoyed more political support by municipal, county, and federal officials. Political support for the pro-immigrant side was available in certain majority-minority municipalities (Santa Ana and Anaheim), state elected officials, and one representative from Congress.

Organizations and resources of pro- and anti-immigrant sides

Organizations and resources on the pro-immigrant side

In terms of mobilization activities, the pro-immigrant side has had important advantages (see, Table 6.4). The pro-immigrant side embarked on more activities (118 versus 82) and involved more distinctive types of actors (138 versus 65). Pro-immigrant activities also launched more formal coalitions that involved broader swaths of civil society. In terms of actors involved, the four most prominent actors on the pro-immigrant side were (in order of importance): nonprofit organizations, activists, community members, and religious organizations. Nonprofit organizations assumed a dominant role in a social movement network that consisted of a broad array of civil society actors. The nonprofit organizations making up the pro-immigrant side included large civil rights organizations like the American Civil Liberties Union of Southern California, national immigrant rights organizations like National Day Laborer Organizing Network, and local activist groups like Resilience OC. The latter organization was composed of RAIZ (Resistencia Autonomia Igualdad y Liderazgo) and Santa Ana Boys and Men of Color. Nonprofit organizations were clustered in two southern California areas (Santa Ana and central Los Angeles) and collaborated regularly in a variety of campaigns. For instance, Resilience OC was located in Santa Ana and in close proximity to El Centro Cultural de Mexico, Los 32 Por Mexico, Santa Ana Building Healthy Communities, Public Law Center, among others. In addition to these organizations, Resilience OC worked closely with Colectivo Tonantzin and Los Amigos, both located in neighboring cities. These organizations collaborated closely on a range of issues including immigration, gentrification, health, and community gardens. There was another important organization hub in central Los Angeles. Organizations included a network of well-established nonprofit organizations like the National Day Laborer Organizing Network, Center for Humane Immigrant Rights of Los Angeles (CHIRLA), the California Immigration Policy Center, and Clergy and Laity United for Economic Justice (CLUE). These organizations worked closely with legal advocacy groups, also headquartered in central Los Angeles, like the American Civil Liberties Union of Southern California and the Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund.
The ACLU, NDLON, and CLUE played particularly important roles in supporting the campaigns of their allies in Santa Ana.

Certain pro-immigrant organizations enjoyed substantial financial resources. The most prominent advocacy organization involved in Orange County immigration battles was the ACLU of Southern California. In 2018, the organization’s total revenue was $10,621,226, and it employed 95 people. Another prominent Los Angeles-based organization was National Day Laborer Organizing Network (NDLON). In 2018, its revenue was $7,309,223 and it employed 46 people. Though these two organizations did not invest all their financial resources in Santa Ana, they possessed sufficient resources to provide support to their Santa Ana allies. Santa-Ana based Resilience OC did not have 501(c)3 status, but its close allies did, including El Centro Cultural de Mexico (2018 revenue of $279,412), Santa Ana Building Healthy Communities (2018 revenue of $991,295), and Public Law Center (2018 revenue of $4,543,644).

Resources and organizations on the anti-immigrant side

The anti-immigrant side was less active than its adversaries (82 versus 118 distinctive activities) and involved fewer actors (65 versus 118). The four most prominent actors involved in activities were (in order of importance): government officials, activists, nonprofit organizations, and community members. The anti-immigrant side attracted no support from religious organizations, labor unions, or other civic groups, leaving it with a narrow base of support in civil society. In contrast to the pro-immigrant side, government officials were not simple targets of advocates. They assumed a direct role in participating and leading activism for restrictive measures and against accommodating policies in other jurisdictions.

The organizations were self-identified nativist advocacy groups, including organizations like the California Coalition for Immigration Reform, We the People Rising, and the Minutemen. The two most important nativist organizations during the 2010s, California Coalition for Immigration Reform and We the People, were in Huntington Beach and Claremont respectively. Whereas the former city was one of the historical centers of far-right politics in Orange County, the latter city was located on the eastern edge of Los Angeles County. The once prominent Minutemen was headquartered in Aliso Viejo. These three organizations had been close collaborators during the 2000s. The executive director of California Coalition for Immigration Reform served on the Board of Directors of the Minutemen Project. This relation broke down over financial disputes, recriminations, and eventual lawsuits.

There were not only comparatively fewer organizations, but these anti-immigrant organizations also had comparatively limited resources. The California Coalition for Immigration Reform reported zero revenue in 2018. Its highest revenue during the last 20 years was $41,728 in 2006. We the People, the Claremont-based organization, did not have 501(c)3 status and did not file a 990-tax form with the IRS. The Washington D.C.-based organization, Federation for American Immigration Reform (FAIR), was the most well-resourced organization to provide Orange County activists with support. During the 2010s, this support was limited to organizing an amicus brief in support of the Justice Department’s lawsuit against California. Deficits in organizational resources were made up, as the next section will show, by the role that government officials played in the anti-immigrant cause.
In sum, the pro-immigrant side depended on several well-resourced and professionalized organizations clustered mostly in Santa Ana and Los Angeles. Certain government officials expressed support for their campaigns, but they played a traditional government role and did not assume activist roles. By contrast, the anti-immigrant side consisted of resource-poor organizations with a narrow base of civic support. These deficits were partially compensated by committed activists and activist government officials.

Table 6.4: Mobilization activities and actors involved in Orange County, 2010-2018

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Anti-immigrant</th>
<th>Pro-immigrant</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mobilization activities</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>177</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actors involved</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>203</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activist</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coalition</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government Official</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-profit</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Union</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Geographically uneven mobilizations

This last section examines how this multijurisdictional field affected mobilizations. The first subsection assesses the targets of anti- and pro-immigrant mobilizations and the locations of their activities. The second subsection examines the mobilization strategy of pro-immigrant groups in the period following Donald Trump’s election to the presidency. The third subsection analyzes the anti-immigrant mobilization against California’s sanctuary law. Both sides mobilized to exploit opportunities in friendly jurisdiction in order to combat and weaken policies generated by adversarial jurisdictions. And finally, both sides targeted all four major jurisdictional levels and many municipalities (see, Table 6.5), but emphases varied according to different sets of strategic opportunities and resources.
Table 6.5: Actors in Orange County by government jurisdiction, 2010-2018

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Attitude on immigration</th>
<th>Target of anti-mobilization</th>
<th>Target of pro-mobilization</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Federal</td>
<td>-0.23</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State</td>
<td>0.26</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>County</td>
<td>-0.29</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City</td>
<td>-0.17</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The uneven geographies of pro-immigrant mobilizations

For the pro-immigrant side, the targets were divided primarily between the federal government and municipalities (see, Table 6.5). Throughout the decade, immigrant rights groups mobilized against Obama and Trump administrations’ policies to detain and deport immigrants. Prior to the election of Donald Trump, activists in Santa Ana had already started to participate in anti-deportation campaigns. These campaigns employed various tactics to defend undocumented immigrant residents through protests at ICE facilities and elevating the cases of deportees. In addition to mobilizing against federal immigration policies, pro-immigrant groups also supported policies that would legalize the status of undocumented immigrants. Such policies included the DREAM Act, DACA, DAPA, and comprehensive immigration reform.

Though federal immigration policies made this level of government the most important target, municipalities were also an important target of mobilizations. Municipalities in Orange County presented both political opportunities and threats to pro-immigrant forces. According to Figure 6.3, pro-immigrant forces mobilized heavily in the pro-immigrant city of Santa Ana. This was by far the most important target of pro-immigrant campaigns in Orange County. The city housed many of the most important pro-immigrant organizations and activists in the county and the city council had expressed some degree of support for their cause. Organizations and activists had long been advocating for more services to immigrant communities and greater protections from federal enforcement. They also sought to pressure the city to extricate itself from partnerships and contracts with Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). For instance, in March 2016, pro-immigrant activists in Santa Ana mobilized to denounce the transfer of a detainee, Samuel Sixto, from the Orange County Sheriff’s jail to ICE. Activist targeted the Sheriff’s Department and pressured the Santa Ana city council to pass a resolution denouncing local collaborations with ICE. Though Santa Ana activists headed up the effort, Los Angeles-based NDLON provided legal and strategic support. After Santa Ana passed a resolution denouncing municipal collaborations with ICE, NDLON stated that the city council was “becoming an example of how localities need to be proactive about protecting their residents from reckless immigration enforcement and deportations” (City News Service, 2016).

After the 2016 presidential election, Santa Ana groups along with their Los Angeles-based allies redoubled their efforts in a campaign to pass a robust sanctuary city ordinance. Due to the potential risks associated with the proposed ordinance, city officials hedged and proposed a
symbolic resolution. Advocates pushed back and argued that a policy could only defend immigrant residents if it severed ties with the federal immigration enforcement agencies. Elected officials proposed an ordinance that would provide protections to immigrants in detention for civil matters, but the city would continue to collaborate with ICE for immigrants with criminal offenses. Advocates balked, demanding that all immigrants be provided protection, especially the most vulnerable. OC Resilience maintained that, “We don’t want to get into this language in the ordinance that the city is not going to work with ICE on civil matters, but they are going to work with ICE on criminal matters... Trump is asking to deport the most vulnerable. For us, Santa Ana will stand strong and be there for us, for the most vulnerable” (Kwong 2016). Three days before Donald Trump’s inauguration, the Santa Ana city council voted to enact the most sweeping sanctuary ordinance in California, if not the country. Santa Ana activists and their allies then pressured the city council to support a public fund to support the legal defense of immigrants in deportation proceedings. In collaboration with the Vera Institute, the city agreed to contribute $65,000 to create the Orange County Justice Fund and join the Vera Institute’s SAFE Cities Network.

Advocates also mobilized in hostile cities to reverse restrictive policies. For instance, pro-immigrant groups mobilized against restrictive measures in Costa Mesa, Orange, and Los Alamitos. These counter-mobilizations mostly targeted municipalities in close proximity to Santa Ana. Locational proximity made it easier to recruit activists and organizations to come out in support of their activities. Counter-mobilizations were consequently concentrated in northern Orange County and remained sparse in the more distant and more uniformly hostile southern part of the county.

Lastly, advocates from across the state started a campaign for a statewide sanctuary law. At the helm of this mobilization were NDLO and the ACLU of Southern California, two organizations that had been important supporters of Santa Ana activists. Though Orange County organizations fully supported their efforts and were a part of the statewide coalition, these organizations lacked the resources and status to play a determinative role. They acted as “suburban free riders”, allowing larger and better resourced organizations to assume a leading role (De Graauw et. al. 2013). The coalition turned to California Senate leader Kevin De Leon and persuaded him to sponsor Senate Bill 54 (Values Act). De Leon represented the immigrant stronghold of northeast Los Angeles and had longtime ties to NDLO, the ACLU of Southern California, and powerful labor organizations. Senator De Leon introduced SB54 to the state senate, and activists launched a successful campaign to pressure the state legislature to pass it. The law imposed strict limitations on cooperation with federal immigration authorities, including restrictions on police queries about immigration status, sharing information with federal authorities, and transferring detainees to federal authorities without a warrant.

Thus, activists and advocacy organizations in Orange County developed strategies that responded to the opportunities and constraints found within this multijurisdictional field. As the federal government remained the most important jurisdiction in immigration matters, they protested restrictive policies and mobilized support for favorable ones. Pro-immigrant groups in Orange County also targeted the municipality with the most political opportunities and organizational resources: Santa Ana. Orange County advocates and their Los Angeles-based allies pressured the city to extricate itself from jail contracts with ICE and to enact far-reaching sanctuary policy in
the state. And lastly, Orange County-based activists supported the campaign for SB 54 but ceded leadership in the campaign to more prominent organizations in Los Angeles.

The uneven geographies of anti-immigrant mobilizations

The multijurisdictional field presented anti-immigrant forces with a different set of political opportunities and constraints, which influenced their strategy (see, Table 6.5). Municipalities had long been an important jurisdiction for anti-immigrant campaigns. Government officials were not only responsive to the anti-immigrant cause, but they also assumed leading roles in campaigns for restrictive policies. Many Orange County city councilors and mayors had direct relations with anti-immigrant activist and organizations. They were in ideological alignment with the cause and believed that advancing it could improve their political standing within regional and state politics. These conditions gave rise to several activist officials who blurred the line between government and social movement. For instance, the mayor of Costa Mesa, Alan Mansoor, had long led the anti-immigrant fight in the county. He was particularly active in the effort to restrict day laborers from soliciting work in public. Mansoor explained his position in the following way, “Do you want a bunch of unknown people loitering in front of your home or soliciting near your home or in front of your business, especially when many of them are here illegally? I think the answer is no” (Carcamo and Pak 2010a). Such behavior is consistent with the literature (Newman 2013).

Mansoor also led an effort to support Arizona’s anti-immigrant law, SB 1070. Mansoor and other activists were particularly aggrieved by California’s move to boycott Arizona. Mansoor initiated a countywide effort to create “rule of law” policies, which would require all contractors working in a city to use E-Verify or risk losing their business license. Mansoor’s “rule of law” policy was a response to the moves of three other jurisdictions: an act of solidarity with Arizona, a criticism of sanctuary policies introduced by municipalities, and a criticism of California’s stance against Arizona. He noted that, “I have a lot of concerns with cities calling themselves sanctuary cities. It’s important we state that we do not support illegal immigration” (Carcamo and Pak 2010b). Mansoor lobbied elected officials throughout Orange County to adopt similar measures. Though none would pass a “rule of law” ordinance, many adopted nonbinding resolutions to support Arizona and adopt the label of “rule of law” city. These included Rancho Santa Margarita, Orange, Villa Park, Cypress, and Yorba Linda, among others. Anti-immigrant organizations and activists provided vocal support for “rule of law” policies and supportive resolutions. For instance, Jim Gilchrist, the leader of the Minutemen, expressed strong support for the mayor’s effort but did not play a big role in the effort. He stated: “What the mayor is doing is he’s sending out the word that Costa Mesa is not a sanctuary city, that it is a civilized, rule of law city...What he wants is what every American wants - that’s a civilized nation governed under the rule of law, not mob rule” (Pak and Fletcher 2010). Though activists strongly supported “rule of law” policies, the mayor of Costa Mesa took the leading role in this effort and not anti-immigrant organizations.

The election of Donald Trump and the passage of California’s SB 54 shifted the target of activities to the state. Officials from different levels of government, along with activists and organizations, worked together to roll back the state law. Though the effort was largely led by government officials, anti-immigrant activists and organizations showed up in force at protests and public meetings to express strong support for governmental efforts.

Early on, the California State Sheriffs’ Association (CSSA) led the effort to block the passage of SB54. County sheriffs across the state contributed to financing lobbying efforts and
Contentious immigration politics in a multijurisdictional field
devolving the communication strategy. Among these, Orange County Sheriff Sandra Hutchens assumed a leading role, lobbying the state government and communicating to regional and national media, including repeated appearances on Fox News. In keeping with CSSA talking points, Sheriff Hutchens argued that SB54 would flood the streets with “criminal aliens” and place her department into a conflict with the federal government. “Sheriffs across California will have to choose whether to honor current agreements with the federal government or violate California law” (Yee 2017). She also expressed concern that SB54 would imperil the county’s “bed for feds” program. By leasing jail beds to the federal government for detained immigrants, this program generated $26 million dollars of additional revenue for the Orange County Sheriff’s Department. Following the passage of SB54, the Orange County Sheriff’s Department continued its effort to weaken and circumvent the law.

Alongside the sheriff department’s efforts, activists and municipal officials mobilized to exempt many cities from SB54. By ensuring exemptions, these actors hoped to weaken the law’s implementation. “Charter cities”, they argued, had the authority to gain exemptions from state laws that did not cohere with their governing charter. Los Alamitos, a small city in north Orange County, was the first city to embrace the strategy. The Los Alamitos city council and mayor claimed that SB 54 was unconstitutional and their “charter city” status provided grounds for exemption. One councilman stated that SB 54 “may be in direct conflict with federal laws and the Constitution of the United States” and that he “finds that it is impossible to honor our oath to support and defend the Constitution of the United States” and stay in compliance with SB54 (Kopetman 2018a). Anti-immigrant activists aligned with the organizations, We the People, attended council meetings and provided strong support for the elected officials of this small city. One of these activists argued that, “Everyone holding elective office takes the same oath to uphold the laws to protect and defend the Constitution of the United States...I do believe somewhere in our history; we fought a war to prevent states from ignoring the law of the land and preserving the union” (Kopetman 2018a).

Huntington Beach followed the lead of Los Alamitos and initiated a lawsuit against California. Its lawsuit maintained that Huntington Beach had the authority to exempt itself from SB54 because of its charter status. The city’s attorney argued that, “As a charter city, we have autonomy over our local governance. We are arguing that SB54 is unconstitutional as it relates to charter cities only” (Goulding 2018a). He added that all 121 of California’s charter cities were exempt from SB54. During city council meetings, residents, activists, and councilmembers argued that immigrants posed a threat to the country and that SB54 reflected state overreach. One councilmember explained that, “We fight the state whenever they overreach” (Goulding 2018b). Huntington Beach was more impactful than Los Alamitos because the city had a large and well-resourced legal department with a city attorney. The resources available to the city allowed it to mount a lawsuit and defend itself from the lawsuits of pro-immigrant adversaries like the ACLU of Southern California and NDLON. The city’s position was originally supported by an Orange County superior court judge who agreed that SB54 did not apply to charter cities. However, the California Court of Appeals announced in January 2020 that SB54 did not violate the constitution and that the state law is “narrowly tailored to avoid unnecessary interference in local government” (City of Huntington Beach v. Becerra 2020).

Alongside these efforts, the federal Justice Department filed a lawsuit against California in US District Court on March 6, 2018. The lawsuit sought to strike down three state laws that
restricted state and local cooperation with the federal law enforcement in the area of immigration: SB 54 (Values Act), AB 450 (Dignity, Not Detention), and AB 103 (Immigrant Worker Protection Act). Allies of the federal government worked to sign up elected officials, cities, and counties to an Amicus Brief for the three lawsuits. In particular, the Immigration Reform Law Institute (IRLI), an affiliate of the national anti-immigrant organization Federation for American Immigration Reform (FAIR), led the effort, noting that “We’re lining up cities to join us with the amicus briefs” (Kopetman 2018b). The Amicus Brief would allow the federal government to claim that the California law did not only violate the principle of federal preemption, but also the interests of county and municipal governments to cooperate with federal immigration agencies. A longtime conservative stalwart in Orange County, Congressman Dana Rohrabacher, worked with IRLI to secure enough signatories on the Amicus Brief. Rohrabacher believed that, “By making us a sanctuary city and state, we’re doing nothing more than attracting millions more people to come to this country and to consume the very wealth that is necessary for our quality of life” (City News Service 2018).

Anti-immigrant forces therefore went on the offensive against the state of California. The Sheriff’s Department worked to circumvent the law, municipalities sought exemptions, and the Justice Department sued the state of California and organized an amicus brief among Orange County municipalities. While government officials essentially led this inter-jurisdictional alliance against the state, activists attended public meetings and protest events to demonstrate popular support and pressure wavering politicians.

**Conclusion**

The aim of this paper has been to show how contentious politics do not unfold within single jurisdictions but across a multijurisdictional field. Such a field distributes opportunities unevenly to advocates on each side of the issue, shaping their strategic options. How activists respond to these options depends on the distribution of resources to each side. The combination of opportunities and resources shapes the strategies pursued within this field.

For the case at hand, pro-immigrant organizations consisted largely of nonprofit organizations in Los Angeles and Santa Ana. These organizations campaigned against restrictive federal immigration policies and launched a sanctuary city campaign in the city with most opportunities. The intent of the campaign was to provide some protections for immigrants in one jurisdiction (Santa Ana) against law enforcement incursions from another (ICE). Once the Santa Ana campaign succeeded, resource-rich Los Angeles organizations mounted a statewide campaign while their Orange County allies provided support. The anti-immigrant side was primarily led by municipal elected officials. Organizations on this side were resource-poor and lacked the capacity to mount complex campaigns. These officials used the authority of their municipalities to enact policies to restrict immigrants, express solidarity for other allied governments, and launch attacks against adversarial jurisdictions like the state of California. For both sides, friendly municipalities were used as political strongholds for advocates to attack adversarial jurisdictions and defend their own in this complex political field.

The paper maintains that the unit of analysis for contentious immigration politics should not be a single jurisdiction (whether the federal government or municipalities) but the multijurisdictional field. Expanding from a single to multiple jurisdictions entails methodological and
conceptual complexity but the result can be a more accurate account of contentious immigration politics. Reconceiving the political opportunity structure as a multijurisdictional field is not only an important move to better understand immigration politics. It can also provide more nuanced geographical readings of other forms of contentious politics. Mobilizations from Black Lives Matter to marriage equality have unfolded across a myriad of jurisdictions with different opportunities, constraints, and threats. The ultimate strategy of any mobilization reflects the options laid out by the entirety of the playing field and not a single jurisdiction. The lessons of this paper should therefore be generalized to other mobilizations.