Beyond immigrant ethnic politics?

Organizational innovation, collaboration and competition in the Los Angeles immigrant rights movement (1980-2015)

Gnes, D.

Publication date
2018

Document Version
Other version

License
Other

Citation for published version (APA):

General rights
It is not permitted to download or to forward/distribute the text or part of it without the consent of the author(s) and/or copyright holder(s), other than for strictly personal, individual use, unless the work is under an open content license (like Creative Commons).

Disclaimer/Complaints regulations
If you believe that digital publication of certain material infringes any of your rights or (privacy) interests, please let the Library know, stating your reasons. In case of a legitimate complaint, the Library will make the material inaccessible and/or remove it from the website. Please Ask the Library: https://uba.uva.nl/en/contact, or a letter to: Library of the University of Amsterdam, Secretariat, Singel 425, 1012 WP Amsterdam, The Netherlands. You will be contacted as soon as possible.
BEYOND IMMIGRANT ETHNIC POLITICS?

Davide Gnes
BEYOND IMMIGRANT ETHNIC POLITICS?


Davide Gnes
BEYOND IMMIGRANT ETHNIC POLITICS?
Organizational Innovation, Collaboration and Competition in the Los Angeles Immigrant

ISBN: 978-94-6233-979-8
© Davide Gnes. All rights reserved.

Cover design and layout: Nicola Gnes
Print: Gildeprint, Enschede, NL.

This research was funded by the European Union’s Seventh Framework Program (FP7/2007-2013) under grant agreement n° 316796. The research was part of INTEGRIM: Integration and international migration: pathways and integration policies, a larger EU-funded research project involving 8 partner universities: University of Amsterdam, University of Deusto, University of Liège, University of Sussex, University of Lisbon, Koç University, Central European University (CEU), and University of Poitiers.
BEYOND IMMIGRANT ETHNIC POLITICS?


ACADEMISCH PROEFSCHRIFT

ter verkrijging van de graad van doctor
aan de Universiteit van Amsterdam
op gezag van de Rector Magnificus
prof. dr. ir. K.I.J. Maex

ten overstaan van een door het College voor Promoties ingestelde commissie,
in het openbaar te verdedigen in de Agnietenkapel
op woensdag 27 juni 2018, te 10.00 uur

door Davide Gnes
geboren te Pavia, Italië
Promotiecommissie:

Promotor: Prof. dr. J.N. Tillie Universiteit van Amsterdam

Copromotor(es): Dr. W. J. Nicholls University of California-Irvine
Dr. F.F. Vermeulen Universiteit van Amsterdam

Overige leden: Prof. dr. W.G.J. Duyvendak Universiteit van Amsterdam
Prof. dr. B.M. Burgoon Universiteit van Amsterdam
Dr. D.V. Vigneswaran Universiteit van Amsterdam
Prof. dr. J.L. Uitermark Universiteit van Amsterdam
Prof. dr. R. Milkman The City University of New York
Prof. dr. M.L.J.C. Schrover Universiteit Leiden

Faculteit der Maatschappij- en Gedragswetenschappen
TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES AND FIGURES ........................................................................................................8

CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION ...........................................................................................................9
   The Rise and Fall of a Class-Based Immigrant Rights Movement in Los Angeles. How Did It Happen? .................................................................................................................................9
   Theoretical Framework of the Research Project ...........................................................................13
   Immigrant Incorporation and Political Participation in Receiving Societies: The Role of Contentious Politics and Social Movements .................................................................13
   Understanding Immigrant Organizations and their Organizing Process. A Relational Perspective .................................................................................................................................16

Research Methodology ................................................................................................................20
   Perspective on Social Reality .......................................................................................................21
   Research Method and Case Selection .........................................................................................21
   Data Sources, Analysis and Limitations ......................................................................................23
   Researcher’s Positionality, Access to the Field and Ethnical Issues ........................................25
   Notes on Dissertation Terminology ..........................................................................................26

Outline of the dissertation ..............................................................................................................27

CHAPTER 2. THE RESEARCH PUZZLE IN CONTEXT: THEORIZING LOS ANGELES AS A CRITICAL CASE .........................................................................................................................31
   Introduction ..................................................................................................................................31
   The Social and Economic Context of Immigrant Los Angeles ................................................32
      Los Angeles and the Great Demographic Transformation: From ‘Nativist City’ to ‘Capital of the Third World’ ..............................................................................................................32
      Between Economic Restructuring, Legal Precarity and Differential Racialization: Creating an Immigrant Working Class ........................................................................39
   The Political Context of Immigrant Los Angeles ....................................................................47
      Immigrant Political Activism and the Historical Salience of Racial and Ethnic Politics .................................................................................................................................47
      Immigrant Organizing Under Adverse Conditions ................................................................53
   The Research Puzzle(s) Reframed ..............................................................................................58

CHAPTER 3. IMMIGRATION, IDEOLOGY AND THE ‘THIRD WORLD’: ORGANIZATIONAL INNOVATION IN THE EARLY DAYS OF THE LA IMMIGRANT RIGHTS MOVEMENT ...................................................................................................................61
   Introduction ..................................................................................................................................61
   Innovation, Ideology and Immigrant Organizations in a Transnational Context ..................63
   Methodology ................................................................................................................................65
   Part One. Community Formation and Early Transmitters in Los Angeles .........................66
   Part Two. Innovators and Knowledge Synthesizers ................................................................70
      The Instituto de Educación Popular del Sur de California (IDEPSCA) .......................................70
      The Korean Immigrant Workers Advocates (KIWA) .............................................................74
The Pilipino Workers Center (PWC)........................................................................................................... 77
Discussion and Conclusion.......................................................................................................................... 80
CHAPTER 4. LEGITIMACY AS THE BASIS FOR ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF VOLUNTARY ORGANIZATIONS ......................................................................................................................... 83
Voluntary Organizations and Legitimacy .................................................................................................. 83
Defining Legitimacy .................................................................................................................................. 87
The Context of Legitimacy: Institutionalization of Normative Expectations and Grounds for Legitimacy. ......................................................................................................................................................... 89
The Context of Legitimacy: Audiences and Power Inequality ................................................................. 93
Organizational Agency in Legitimation Strategies: An Institutional Perspective ............................... 97
Organizational Agency in Legitimation Strategies: A Strategic Perspective ........................................ 101
Conclusion.................................................................................................................................................. 103
CHAPTER 5. ORGANIZATIONAL LEGITIMACY BEYOND ETHNICITY? SHIFTING ORGANIZATIONAL LOGICS IN THE STRUGGLE FOR IMMIGRANT RIGHTS IN LOS ANGELES ............................................................................................................................................................. 107
Introduction............................................................................................................................................... 107
Literature review ....................................................................................................................................... 109
Methodology ............................................................................................................................................. 111
The Politics of the Korean Immigrant Community in Los Angeles ....................................................... 113
The Korean Resource Center: Building Immigrant Ethnic Politics ...................................................... 114
From Ethnic International Solidarity to Ethnic Engagement in the US .................................................. 114
Placing Korean Americans at the Center of the Mainstream Immigrant Rights Debate ...................... 117
The Korean Immigrant Workers Advocates: Building Immigrant Class Politics ............................... 119
Building an Immigrant Working Class Organization in a Hostile Environment.................................... 119
Articulating Legitimating Strategies Outside of the Korean Immigrant Community ................................ 121
From Korean Immigrant Workers to a Multi-Ethnic Immigrant Workers Constituency ...................... 123
Conclusion.................................................................................................................................................. 126
CHAPTER 6. BEYOND THE LOS ANGELES MODEL? UNDERSTANDING THE EVOLUTION OF IMMIGRANT WORKER ORGANIZATIONS THROUGH A HYBRID RESOURCE-BASED MODEL .......................................................................................................................................................... 129
From Ethnic to Immigrant Working-Class Mobilization? An Assessment of Los Angeles ‘Exceptionalism’ ......................................................................................................................................................... 129
Collaboration between Ideologically Similar Organizations: A Hybrid Organizational Approach ........................................................................................................................................................................... 132
Methodology ............................................................................................................................................. 135
Phase 1 (1990s – late 1990s): The Dawn of an Innovative Immigrant Worker Movement .................................................. 138
Organizations and Ideologies .................................................................................................................. 138
LIST OF TABLES AND FIGURES


