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Testing the Relationship Between Local Context and Immigrant-Serving Nonprofit Strategies

https://doi.org/10.1515/npf-2023-0063
Received August 13, 2023; accepted September 23, 2024

Abstract: Studies at the nexus of immigration, organizations, and migrant mobilizations find that the strategies that immigrant-serving nonprofit organizations (INOs) employ differ in cities with disparate levels of immigrant inclusion. Yet studies yield mixed results abound other shortcomings in the literature. This study draws from disparate literatures and theoretical frameworks to assemble an understanding on the interrelations between local context and strategies. I investigate the following questions: how does the level of citizenry inclusion impact the strategies employed by INOs, and do more inclusive cities facilitate or constrain contentious advocacy? I draw from a national sample of INOs to test the empirical relationship. The results have implications for political opportunity theory and future lines of research drawing from this framework. Research, nonprofit practice, and policy implications are discussed.

Keywords: immigrant-serving nonprofits; immigrants; political opportunity theory; local context; citizenship

1 Introduction

In recent years, there has been a shift from the national to the local context in explaining variance in immigrant-related outcomes. This shift constitutes an advancement in scholarship enhancing understandings of immigrant realities. Scholars at the nexus of immigration, organizations, and migrant mobilizations have taken similar steps by examining how the strategies that immigrant-serving nonprofit organizations (INOs) deploy vary across local contexts. Many studies draw from political opportunity theory to explain variance in strategies that advocates and nonprofits employ. The central tenet of this theory is that collective action is a

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function of opportunities and constraints in the political environment in which activists operate (Eisinger 1973; Tilly 1995).

In alignment with political opportunity theory, studies find that political opportunity structures shape strategies. For instance, in their comparison of activism in France, the Netherlands, and Germany Nicholls and Uitermark (2016) show that hostility can give rise to more repressive policing, which increases the risk of deportation. Accommodating contexts still face exclusion, but protections and support from elected officials abate risks for engaging in public protest. Studies seeking to explain variance in strategies across local contexts yield mixed results, however. Some studies show that inclusionary environments foster immigrant activism and contentious strategies such as protests (Burciaga and Martinez 2017; Eisinger 1973; Koopmans 2004; Nicholls 2021, 2014). Others demonstrate that exclusionary environments disempower immigrants leading to protests (De Graauw 2015; Kondo 2012).

What explains mixed results? One explanation is that studies employ qualitative case study methods examining protests in select cities which do not allow for measuring differences and statistically testing whether differences are significant. Many studies sample on the dependent variable rather than the broader population which limits insights (McAdam and Boudet 2012). Disparate conceptualizations of political opportunity may lead to diverging findings (Meyer 2004). To holistically understand the relationship between strategies and local context, a large-N analysis employing statistical techniques with close attention to conceptualization is needed.

To address these limitations, this study investigates two questions: how does the level of citizenry inclusion impact the strategies employed by INOs, and do more inclusive cities facilitate or constrain contentious advocacy? This study defines an INO as an organization whose primary mission is to serve or advocate on the behalf of immigrants or promote their cultural heritage (de Graauw 2016, p. 18).

This study builds upon the perspective that political opportunities *and* citizenry regimes explain variance in strategies (Giugni and Passy 2004; Ireland 1994; Koopmans 2004). While many studies conceive citizenry regimes as a dimension of political opportunities, this study conceives them as separate constructs. I argue that citizenry inclusion, or the degree to which immigrants have rights, legal status, or are culturally accepted in the polity (Sorrell-Medina 2023) explains variance in political opportunities, which influence strategies. Many studies allude to this relationship (e.g., de Graauw 2015; de Graauw and Vermeulen 2016; Nicholls and Uitermark 2016). Given the lack of conceptual consensus of what constitutes political opportunity (Meyer 2004) and the significant role of citizenry exclusion in explaining INOs (Ejorh 2011; Gonzalez Benson and Pimentel Walker 2021; Jiménez 2011; Nicholls and Uitermark 2016; Sorrell-Medina 2023; Van der Leun and Bouter 2015), I emphasize

citizenry inclusion over political opportunity and theorize that strategies will vary in cities with disparate levels of citizenry inclusion.

While understandings of citizenry regimes are typically expressed with assimilation models (e.g., Giugni and Passy 2004; Koopmans 2004), critical race theory offers a more accurate description of race relations in the United States (Christian, Seamster, and Ray 2019). Critical race theory acknowledges race and racism in society (Bell 1995). Drawing on this theory, I hypothesize that irrespective of variance in strategies in cities with disparate levels of citizenry inclusion, differences will not be statistically significant because local governments are biased towards Whites concerning policy and practice (Kelly and Lobao 2021; Schaffner, Rhodes, and La Raja 2020). Salient and static patterns of racism in cities will generate isomorphism in strategies precluding significant differences in the aggregate given organizations behave similarly when facing similar environmental constraints (DiMaggio and Powell 1991). To evaluate these theoretical postulates, I implemented a national survey on a stratified random sample of INOs (n = 66) in U.S. cities with disparate levels of citizenry inclusion.

This study is organized as follows. First, I discuss the strategies that INOs employ. Next, I explore the literature on local context and INO strategies. The next section presents the theoretical framework. The following sections present methods and results. I conclude with empirical, theoretical, nonprofit, and policy implications.

2 Strategies of the Sector

This section introduces the strategies that INOs employ, which is helpful for conceptualization and measurement. Given the exclusion that immigrants face in society, INOs enact several strategies contributing to immigrant inclusion outcomes (Sorrell-Medina 2022). For instance, INOs provide social services such as employment training, counseling, food and nutritional services, general health services, and housing services contributing to social rights inclusion (Hector Cordero-Guzmán 2005). They provide legal services such as citizenship classes, preparation for legal paperwork, and legal counsel to promote legal inclusion (Cordero-Guzmán et al. 2008). INOs host cultural activities in response to xenophobia and to promote a sense of cultural inclusion (Ejorh 2011; Sorrell-Medina 2023; Wilson 2011). INOs and advocates launch protests to promote immigrants' rights and legalization (Nicholls and Uitermark 2016).

Recent studies advanced conceptual understandings of strategies. In her strategy typology, De Graauw (2016) points to three strategies that INOs employed to advocate for immigrants' rights in San Francisco: *administrative advocacy* (working administratively with city officials to provide services and implement policy),

cross-sectoral and *cross-organizational collaboration* (collaborating with the local government officials and other organizations to achieve goals), and *strategic issue framing* (customizing the organization's message to gain support).

Sorrell-Medina (2022) expands de Graauw's typology by unearthing the range of strategies that INOs employ contributing to immigrants' rights, cultural, and legal inclusion outcomes. According to this typology, strategies manifest on three levels and are multi-dimensional. The macro-level strategies that INOs enact are *services* and *advocacy*. *Advocacy* refers to actions that seek to change norms, institutions, and societal beliefs. *Services* refer to activities providing goods. *Services* can be further specified into the following meso-level strategies: *legal services* and *social services*. *Advocacy* is specified with the following meso-level strategies: *policy advocacy*, *faith organizing*, *administrative advocacy*, *cultural activities*, *public education*, *strategic issue framing*, *community participation*, and *confrontational advocacy*. INOs also collaborate with several entities (e.g., government, churches, and other organizations) when implementing services and advocacy. Meso-level strategies can be further specified with a universe of micro-level strategies. For instance, *confrontational strategies* can include protests, civil disobedience, and filing lawsuits.

In sum, strategies are multi-level and multi-dimensional. The conceptualization here lays the groundwork for the development of an empirical measure for measuring strategies.

3 Local Context and Strategies

This section synthesizes the literature at the nexus of strategies and local context and identifies shortcomings. The dominant theory guiding understanding of the interrelations between local context and strategies is political opportunity theory (Eisinger 1973; McAdam 1999; Meyer 2004; Tilly 1995). This theory espouses that political opportunity structure shapes citizenry response. *Political opportunity structure*, as defined in Tilly (1995, p. 378), refers to "the organization of power, patterns of repression or facilitation, and presence of allies or enemies."

Against this backdrop, studies examining the relationship between local context and strategies find that political opportunities shape strategies (Burciaga and Martinez 2017; De Graauw 2015; Kondo 2012; Kortmann 2012; Nicholls 2021; Schrover and Vermeulen 2005). An early study testing political opportunity theory to explain Black riots in the United States found that protests are unlikely to occur in cities with very high and very low levels of local government responsiveness. Instead, protests are likely to be more salient in cities with a mix of open and closed levels of government responsiveness. This is because cities with very high levels of government responsiveness preempt protests given conventional means to redress grievances. Later

works on immigrant mobilizations found that hostile environments lead to policing and other repressive strategies that preclude immigrants with precarious legal status from mobilizing (Nicholls and Uitermark 2016).

Studies drawing from political opportunity theory are mixed, however. One strand of the literature reveals that when local governments and planners are closed, this disempowers immigrants and leads to protests (e.g. de Draauw 2015; Kondo 2012). Another strand of the literature shows that closed political contexts preempt protests and that protests are more prone in inclusive contexts (Eisinger 1973; Nicholls 2021; Nicholls and de Wilde 2023). There are several reasons that explain mixed findings including the use of qualitative research methods, varied conceptualizations (Meyer 2004) and sampling on the dependent variable (McAdam and Boudet 2012).

There are other limitations in the literature. Although there are over 100 strategies that INOs employ (Sorrell-Medina 2022), research generated on the interrelations between local context and strategies is mostly concerned with protests and advocacy more broadly. We know less about how local context shapes other strategies (e.g., the provision of services). Although strategies conceptually manifest on three levels (Sorrell-Medina 2022), studies comparing strategies across local contexts do not employ a multi-level lens, which misses how strategies differ across contexts at different levels as one study found (Nicholls, Maussen, and de Mesquita 2016). The following section develops a framework for better understanding this relationship.

4 Theoretical Framework

Some studies contend that citizenship *and* political opportunities shape strategies (Giugni and Passy 2004; Ireland 1994; Koopmans 2004). Studies conceive citizenry inclusion as a dimension of political opportunities. Indicators such as naturalization rates, rights, and cultural acceptance of immigrants by the dominant group provide openings for migrant mobilizations. This section builds upon this literature by reframing the theoretical relationship.

I argue that citizenry inclusion is a critical variable shaping strategies. The degree to which noncitizens have rights, legal status, or are culturally accepted in the polity explains variance in political opportunities, which influence strategies. Many studies allude to this theoretical postulate. One study notes that the enactment of more liberal national citizenship laws citizenship policies in Germany provided an opportunity for local governments to enact inclusive policies (de Graauw and Vermeulen 2016, p. 994). Nicholls and Uitermark (2016, p.26) note that high concentrations of marginalized people provide the opportunity for recruitment to mount and

sustain mobilizations. De Graauw (2015, p. 174) speculates that Asian and Latino organizational advocates in two cities behaved differently given the latter group is conceived negatively in public discourse, providing fewer opportunities, which led them to enact more confrontational strategies.

The mere existence of citizenship creates exclusion which gives rise to organizational activities to combat exclusion (Sorrell-Medina 2023). Given the pervasive of citizenship in society, it is surprising that citizenship is overlooked as a factor explaining variance in strategies or that it is collapsed with conceptions of political opportunities reducing its overall effect. It is plausible, if not probable, that citizenry inclusion and exclusion alone explains strategies independent of political opportunities. This reframing addresses the shortcoming in the literature wherein there is no conceptual agreement of what constitutes political opportunity (Meyer 2004). The citizenship literature makes it clear that citizenship contains three principal dimensions: rights, legal, and cultural (Bloemraad et al. 2019; Bosniak 2000). I therefore emphasize citizenry inclusion over political opportunity and theorize that strategies will vary in cities with disparate levels of citizenry inclusion.

To evaluate this postulate, there is a need to go a step further with operationalization. According to Marshall (1950), the rights dimension of citizenship can be specified into three dimensions: civil rights (freedom of speech, thought, religion, and impartial justice), political rights (freedom to organize and political participation), and social rights (access to education and social welfare). The legal dimension pertains to legal status or closely related variables. The cultural dimension refers to belonging and societal perceptions of who is a valuable member in society (Bloemraad et al. 2019).

Studies suggest that citizenship manifests at the macro-, meso-, and micro-levels wherein the unit of analysis occurs at the federal, local, and individual levels. Given this study is concerned with how citizenship manifests in cities, I elaborate on the meso-level. At this level, localized citizenship is enacted by meso-level entities deferring or precluding citizenship (De Graauw 2014, 2021; Holston and Appadurai 1996). For example, the local government contributes to a city's citizenry inclusion environment by providing or precluding opportunities for citizenry engagement (De Graauw 2015). In collaboration with the local government, INOs contribute to localized citizenship by enacting inclusive policies and fighting for immigrants' rights (De Graauw 2016; De Graauw and Vermeulen 2016). While INOs cannot defer legal status, they contribute to immigrant legalization (Chand et al. 2020). One study shows how INOs contributed to the enactment of a local membership policy providing municipal I.D. cards to immigrants irrespective of legal status (De Graauw 2014).

A city's foreign-born population contributes to a city's citizenry inclusion environment through the enactment of cultural activities (Okamoto and Ebert 2016;

Sorrell-Medina 2022). Outcomes such as deportation and naturalization rates have been used in studies to measure the degree to which cities are inclusive toward immigrants (Amuedo-Dorantes and Puttitanun 2018; Koopmans 2004). One study found that cities with higher asylum grant rates correspond with high levels of immigrant inclusion (Chand, Schreckhise, and Bowers 2017). In sum, salient local contextual variables indicating a city's citizenry inclusion environment include: 1) local government, 2) INOs, 3) foreign-born population, and 4) federal immigration court outcomes.

Citizenship moreover manifests on a continuum (Abrego and Lakhani 2015; Kubal 2013; Menjívar 2006). Citizenry inclusion and exclusion manifest simultaneously. For example, a policy bestowing legal status to one set of immigrants may exclude other immigrants (Nicholls, Maussen, and de Mesquita 2016). Taken together, the above conceptualizations suggest that to measure citizenry inclusion in cities, there is a need to sample meso-level entities to avoid atomistic fallacy and integrate indicators that reflect its various dimensions.

Another point of observation concerning citizenship in the U.S. context is the prevalent role of race and racism in society (Bonilla-Silva 2013). This point forms the basis for the next hypothesis. While understandings of citizenry regimes are typically expressed in terms of assimilation models (e.g., Giugni and Passy 2004; Koopmans 2004), critical race theory may offer a more accurate description of race relations the U.S. (Christian, Seamster, and Ray 2019).

Critical race theory asserts that race is ordinary and part of everyday life (Bell 1995). Scholars of critical race highlight the racial caste system in the U.S. where Whites and whiteness are of supreme social and political value (Harris 1995). Despite policies promoting racial equality, the "new racism" of today is covert but still shaping social and political outcomes (Bonilla-Silva 2013). For instance, historical accounts reveal how Whites received preferential treatment during the emerging social welfare state (Katznelson 2005). Local governments are still biased towards Whites. One study drew upon a national sample of 678 local governments and found that local governments are systematically biased against residents of color irrespective of the share of ethnic individuals in the population (Schaffner, Rhodes, and La Raja 2020). Using data from 1,600 county governments across the nation, another study found that irrespective of the size of the White population in the populace, Whites are more likely to receive larger social service provisioning (Kelly and Lobao 2021). Studies on migration also reveal how immigrants are racialized or how immigration policies favor whiteness (FitzGerald and Cook-Martin 2014; Ngai 2004; Portes and Zhou 1993). Theory, empirics, and history all lead to the same point: cities privilege Whites and whiteness with regard to policy and practice.

Nonprofit leaders therefore operate in a local context privileging the needs, preferences, and ideologies of Whites. Racism manifests in many ways. For instance,

local governments and urban planners may ignore immigrants' needs (Kondo 2012; Pimentel Walker et al. 2021). Ethnic leaders interacting with White counterparts may confront racial microaggressions (Sue et al. 2007). Prevailing norms, beliefs, and attitudes along racial lines impact policy and practice (Bonilla-Silva 2013).

Isomorphism theory helps to explain the mechanisms through which racism in cities influences strategies. This theory postulates that organizations respond to the environments in which they are nested (DiMaggio and Powell 1991). Further, organizations behave similarly when operating under similar environmental constraints. Given in the aggregate a city's citizenry inclusion environment is biased against immigrant and ethnic groups (Kelly and Lobao 2021; Schaffner, Rhodes, and La Raja 2020), nonprofits, therefore, respond to similar salient and static patterns of racism in cities.

The hypothesis formulated is therefore the following. Strategies are likely to differ in cities with disparate levels of citizenry inclusion. Yet salient and static patterns of racism in cities will generate isomorphism in strategies precluding any significant differences in the aggregate given organizations behave similarly when facing similar environmental constraints (DiMaggio and Powell 1991).

5 Methods

The research method employed was survey design which allowed for measurement. To measure strategies, I converted the INO Strategy Typology (Sorrell-Medina 2022) into a 48 item scale. While this typology includes over 100 micro-level strategies, this study did not include all of them to prevent survey response fatigue. Given only three variables are recommended to specify a construct (Bollen 1989), I ensured that each meso-level strategy consisted of at least three micro-level strategies. For example, to measure *legal services*, I asked about the frequency in which the organization enacted the following strategies: provide legal representation, legal education, bond services, naturalization, legal advice, and other. Frequency was measured on a likert scale with each response receiving a numeric value: never (0), a few times a year (1), a few times a month (2), a few times a week (3), or daily (4). Collaboration in services and collaboration in advocacy were collapsed representing the total number of entities the organization primarily collaborates.

The target population for the strategy scale was U.S. INOs with a 501 (c) 3 status. I considered organizations that were active during the time of data collection, or between or between 2019 and 2021. To construct the sample frame for INOs, I drew

upon the National Center for Charitable Statistics (NCCS) database BMF file for the most recent year at the time of the study, 2020.[1] The following immigrant-related IRS activity codes were considered: A23, R21, R22, Q71, M23, P84, and I83.[2] To screen organizations, I ensured that organizations had an immigrant-related indicator in their name or mission statement and removed duplicates, yielding a total of 4,974 potentially eligible organizations in the sample frame.

The sample strategy employed was stratified random sampling. This sample approach is appropriate when the researcher expects that observations will vary due to an underlying characteristic. Separating the groups into strata based on the identified characteristic produces more precise estimates compared to random sampling (Groves et al. 2009). This study created categories (low, medium, high, very high) accounting for how strategies may diverge in cities with different levels of citizenry inclusion.

The selection of cities was determined based on research practicality. One obstacle to stratifying 4,974 INOs into cities with disparate levels of immigrant inclusion was that it called for knowing the degree of inclusion for 2,595 cities (the nonprofits in the sample frame spanned across 2,595 cities). There is no known source providing this information. Hence, I selected the population of 52 cities with a federal immigration court (see Appendix A), where roughly 1,537 organizations operate. Drawing from cities with an immigration court also allowed for using asylum rate as a consistent measure of citizenry inclusion.

To measure citizenry inclusion in the city, I created a scale that measures the city's immigrant inclusion environment based on the four indicators congruent with the theoretical framework: (1) government inclusiveness; (2) rate of foreign-born population; (3) city-level asylum rates; and (4) presence of INOs. The scale is based on the logic that different entities in the city contribute to the city's overall level of citizenry inclusion towards immigrants or reflect the city's immigrant inclusion environment. Each entity displays indicators of citizenry inclusion manifesting across rights, cultural, and legal dimensions.

The first measure (*government*) measured the degree to which the government is inclusive towards immigrants. I evaluated city web pages, city budgets, and other online sources (e.g., Center for Immigration Studies).[3] Eight variables were identified reflecting how cities promote citizenry inclusion among immigrants: (1) the city has a

1 BMF data: https://nccs.urban.org/nccs/catalogs/catalog-bmf.html.

2 https://urbaninstitute.github.io/nccs-legacy/ntee/ntee.html.

3 The Center for Immigration Studies web page (https://cis.org/Map-Sanctuary-Cities-Counties-and-States) was used to determine whether cities have a sanctuary policy, or an agreements, policies, or practices with an ICE agreement obstructing immigration enforcement.

translation option on its web page; (2) offers a language service or assistance to the community as exemplified on its web page; (3) has a law, ordinance or regulation, or practice shielding local immigrants from Immigration Customs Enforcement; (4) funds legal services or has a legal defense fund for immigrants at risk for deportation; (5) has an office of diversity/equity/inclusion; (6) has an office, task group, or other formal entity on refugee and/or immigration affairs; (7) the city celebrates immigrant heritage month, Hispanic heritage month, and/or has issued a proclamation for immigrant heritage month; (8) has a program providing access to all residents irrespective of their legal status with a community/resident ID card. The city received a value of "1" signaling the presence of any indicator and a value of "0" signaling the absence. The resulting score was between 0 and 8 with 0 representing lower levels of government inclusion and 8 representing higher levels.

The second measure was the proportion of foreign-born in the city (*foreign*). Variable *foreign* was created using the American Community Survey data and specifically foreign-born population estimates for the year 2019. Higher proportions of foreign-born corresponded with higher levels of immigrant inclusion in the city.

The third measure was asylum rates (*asylum*). This measure assumes that higher rates of asylum will correspond with higher rates of immigrant inclusion in the city as studies show (Chand, Schreckhise, and Bowers 2017). Data on asylum rates were obtained from TRAC immigration databases, a clearinghouse that provides aggregate level data on asylum rates[4] across 58 federal immigration courts since 2000. Immigration court adjudication outcomes were aggregated to the city level and averaged over a seven-year period (2014–2020).

The final measure was the total count of INOs in the city (*INO*). I calculated the total number INOs in the city as indicated in the NCCS Business Master File database. Given the data was skewed as some cities have more INOs than others, I took the log function which allowed for moderating the effect of large numbers of INOs in large cities.

The final step in creating the scale was transforming the four previously mentioned variables on the same scale.[5] The resulting scale was an eight-point measure denoting lower and higher degrees of citizenry inclusion as follows: 0 to 1.60

4 https://trac.syr.edu/.

5 To transform the measures on an eight-point scale, the minimum and maximum values in the sample were calculated and divided by nine. Dividing it by nine allowed for grouping the two values into eight groups. These eight groups were then assigned values from 0 to 8 to create an eight-point scale.

(very low), 1.61 to 3.20 (low), 3.21 to 4.80 (moderate), 4.81 to 6.40 (high), and 6.41 to 8.00 (very high).

The reliability of the scale was examined with Cronbach alpha, resulting in a value of 0.71, which signifies high internal consistency among the items chosen. I performed confirmatory factor analysis using the common criteria in (Hu and Bentler 1999). Based on these criteria, the specified measurement model yields a good model fit: $X^2 = 5.39$, $p = 0.07$, RMSEA = 0.18, CFI = 0.92, and SRMR = 0.07. The equation goodness of fit furthermore tells us that the selected variables explain 92 % of the variance in variable immigrant inclusion, as indicated by the r-square of 0.92. Latent variable immigrant inclusion explains 7 % of the variance in *foreign*; 91 % of the variance in *government*; 29 % in *asylum*; and 44 % in *INO*.

The implementation of the national survey took place between November 2021 and May 2022 and consisted of group emails, phone calls, and Facebook message outreach to nonprofits. The resulting sample size was 66 INOs across 27 U.S. cities.[6] This sample size was sufficient for the statistical tests employed. The generalizability was evaluated with Slovin formula with a margin of error of 10 %. According to this calculation, 88 organizations were needed for drawing inferences. Given the sample size yielded did not meet the minimum size for generalizations, the results are partially generalizable.

To analyze the data, I constructed ten meso-level strategy variables which were the average of their corresponding micro-level variables. This calculation was conducted for all three years (2019, 2020, 2021). Due to Covid-19 and other factors leading to variation in frequency from year to year, it was fruitful to construct a variable that measured the average degree to which each meso-level and macro-level strategy was implemented across three years.

To test whether the frequency in strategies diverge across cities with disparate levels of immigrant inclusion, I conducted Kruskal Wallis test, a nonparametric test that evaluates whether the rank mean sum of groups are statistically different. This test is appropriate when the data is not normally distributed. I tested for differences in cities with low, medium, high and very high immigrant inclusion contexts[7] for each year and across all years. I also tested for differences in cities with disparate levels of government inclusion. To provide a holistic understanding of the most salient operating in the organizational field, I estimated the degree to which INOs employed different strategies relative to other strategies in 2019. Drawing from the theoretical framework, I hypothesize that strategies will diverge in cities with disparate levels of citizenry inclusion, but differences will not be statistically significant.

6 Appendix A indicates the cities in the resulting sample denoted with symbol *.

7 Given the few number of INOs in the very low category, very low and low were collapsed.

Table 1: Estimating the degree to which INOs employed different strategies in 2019.

Meso-level strategy	Relative proportion	95 % CI
Legal services	7.7 %	[7.4, 7.8]
Social services	13.4 %	[13.2, 13.6]
Policy advocacy	6.2 %	[6.0, 6.4]
Faith organizing	6 .4 %	[6.2, 6.6]
Administrative advocacy	7.7 %	[7.5, 7.8]
Cultural activities	15.4 %	[15.2, 15.5]
Public education	9.7 %	[9.4, 9.9]
Community participation	15.4 %	[15.1, 15.5]
Confrontation	3.0 %	[2.9, 3.1]
Collaboration	15.4 %	[14.9, 15.8]

6 Results

The results reveal that some strategies are more popular than others. This analysis consisted of estimating parameter estimates and measuring whether INOs employed the corresponding strategy as opposed to the frequency in which they employ different strategies. As shown in Table 1, the most salient meso-level strategies employed relative to other meso-level strategies in 2019 are cultural activities, community participation, and collaboration. The least popular strategy is confrontational advocacy, wherein only 3 % INOs employ this strategy [2.9, 3.1]. Parameter

Table 2: Mean frequency for macro- and meso-level strategies for three-year average (2019–2021).

	Low		Medium		High		Very high	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Services (macro)	0.32	0.52	0.56	0.66	0.70	0.87	0.52	0.61
Advocacy (macro)	0.36	0.21	0.52	0.45	0.61	0.72	0.55	0.52
Legal services	0.35	0.79	0.44	0.88	0.52	0.96	0.47	0.48
Social services	0.39	0.46	0.68	0.69	0.88	0.94	0.67	0.79
Policy advocacy	0.09	0.17	0.31	0.51	0.60	1.18	0.43	0.89
Faith organizing	0.08	0.16	0.36	0.62	0.6	1.14	0.23	0.57
Administrative advocacy	0.16	0.32	0.32	0.47	0.64	1.02	0.45	0.70
Cultural activities	0.49	0.43	0.84	0.80	0.77	0.49	1.15	0.75
Public education	0.35	0.50	0.67	0.80	0.67	0.75	0.56	0.66
Community participation	1.00	0.68	1.08	0.82	0.76	0.55	0.91	0.71
Confrontation	0.11	0.16	0.07	0.20	0.16	0.37	0.14	0.28
Collaboration	2.67	1.39	3.40	2.16	3.30	1.68	2.52	1.30

estimates reveal that INOs employ slightly more services compared to advocacy. The mean frequency in which INOs employ services is 0.55, 95 % CI [0.391, 0.709] and the mean frequency in which they employ advocacy is 0.52 [0.399, 0.641].

The general trend for many strategies is that the frequency in nonprofit activities increases with the level of citizenry inclusion in the city (see Table 2). This trend tapers off in cities with very high levels of immigrant inclusion. The standard deviations for many strategies follow a similar trend. In low inclusion contexts, the strategies least employed are policy advocacy, faith organizing, and confrontational advocacy. The most frequently employed strategy in low inclusion context is cultural activities and engaging the community (community participation).

Concerning research question two, the results indicate a nuanced relationship between local context and contentious advocacy. For instance, INOs appear to enact more advocacy strategies as the level of immigrant inclusion in the city increases (Table 2). However, this trend is not true for *all* meso-level advocacy strategies. This alludes to the idea that some advocacy strategies may differ from one another which may constitute a different relationship between strategy and local context. Although confrontational advocacy is *least* employed in low inclusion contexts (Table 2), micro-level strategy protests is *more frequently* employed in low inclusion contexts (Table 3). A closer examination of micro-level confrontational strategies in Table 3 further elucidates how the frequency in different micro-level confrontational strategies differ across contexts.

Despite differences, the results from the Kruskal Wallis tests demonstrate that differences in strategy frequency in cities with disparate levels of citizenry inclusion is not statistically significant for most strategies. This is true when re-specifying the citizenry inclusion variable to represent local government inclusion and using the four indicator variables. It is also true when examining strategies for each year (2019, 2020, 2021) and the average across all three years. To illustrate, the frequency in which INOs employ macro-level strategies advocacy and services do not significantly differ across contexts. For instance, in comparing differences in the average

Table 3: The degree to which different micro-level confrontational strategies are employed between years 2019–2021.

Inclusion level	Host protest, rally, strike, or demonstration	Civil disobedience	File lawsuit	Submit civil rights complaint
Low	0.29	0.00	0.00	0.16
Medium	0.19	0.08	0.11	0.11
High	0.12	0.09	0.09	0.15
Very high	0.12	0.03	0.09	0.09

frequency that INOs employ services when citizenry inclusion is specified with the four measures, the rank sum totals are 201.50 (low), 1,019.50 (medium), 403.00 (high), and 587.00 (very high), X^2 (3) = 2.04, p = 0.56. A Kruskal–Wallis test was conducted on micro-level strategies with a coefficient of variation above three. No significant differences emerged with any micro-level strategy.

The only strategy that significantly differed across contexts was meso-level *cultural activities*. Significant differences were observed irrespective of how citizenry inclusion in the city was specified. When it was specified with the four indicator variables, the rank sum totals for the three-year average were 165.50 (low), 917.00 (medium), 366.50 (high), and 762.00 (very high), X^2(3) = 7.654, p = 0.053. When the citizenry inclusion variable was specified with variable *government* as the only measure, the rank sum totals the three-year average was 305.00 (low), 526.50 (medium), 398.50 (high), and 981.00 (very high), X^2(3) = 9.668, p = 0.021.

7 Discussion

This study addresses several limitations in the literature at the nexus of immigration, organizations, and migrant mobilizations. Contrary to the dominant view, I argue that citizenry inclusion is distinct from political opportunities and may offer more holistic insights in understanding the relationship between strategies and local contexts. Drawing insights from critical race theory (Harris 1995; Bell 1995), isomorphism theory (DiMaggio and Powell 1991), empirical (FitzGerald and Cook-Martin 2014; Kelly and Lobao 2021; Schaffner, Rhodes, and La Raja 2020) and historical evidence (Katznelson 2005; Ngai 2004), I theorize that although strategies may vary in cities with disparate levels of citizenry inclusion, salient and static patterns of racism in U.S. cities will preclude significant differences given organizations behave similarly when facing similar environmental constraints.

The results align with the theoretical framework by showing that strategies vary in cities with disparate levels of citizenry inclusion. The general trend is that as the level of citizenry inclusion increases so does the frequency of strategies. This trend tapers off in cities with very high levels of citizenry inclusion. One explanation is that very inclusive cities may preclude the need for INOs to enact activities. This is because INOs emerge in response to citizenry exclusion (Gonzalez Benson and Pimentel Walker 2021; Jiménez 2011; Nicholls and Uitermark 2016; Sorrell-Medina 2023). This finding therefore informs citizenry exclusion theory (Sorrell-Medina 2023) which theorizes that individuals form INOs in response to citizenry exclusion. The results inform this theory by suggesting that citizenry exclusion may also explain the strategies that INOs employ.

The above finding also informs political opportunity theory. Proponents of political opportunity theory find that the citizenry inclusion dimension of political opportunity explains mobilizations (Giugni and Passy 2004; Koopmans 2004; Ireland 1994). The results align with these studies and add to knowledge by illustrating the usefulness of examining the citizenry inclusion dimension alone. By removing citizenry inclusion from the political opportunity framework, scholars can better understand the interrelations between the two constructs. Future works are encouraged to explore the interrelations between citizenry inclusion *and* political opportunities in shaping strategies that organizations and activists deploy.

Moreover, in alignment with the study's theoretical postulates, the results demonstrate that for the most part, strategies do not significantly differ in cities with disparate levels of citizenry inclusion. One explanation is the racialized characteristic of the U.S. citizenry regime favoring Whites and whiteness as evident in local policy and practice (FitzGerald and Cook-Martin 2014; Harris 1995; Katznelson 2005; Kelly and Lobao 2021; Schaffner, Rhodes, and La Raja 2020). As isomorphism theory predicts (DiMaggio and Powell 1991), organizations respond similarly when operating under similar environmental constraints. Racism embedded in cities likely created isomorphism in strategies precluding significant differences in data. The small standard deviations across all strategies furthermore support this explanation.

The only strategy that significantly differs in cities with disparate levels of citizenry inclusion was meso-level strategy *cultural activities*. To help understand why this is, we must interrogate why INOs enact cultural activities. Some studies demonstrate it is in response to xenophobia, the rise of White nationalism, and cultural stereotypes among social actors (Ejorh 2011; Sorrell-Medina 2023). Others show or argue that it is to enhance a sense of welcome and to preserve cultural identities (Okamoto and Ebert 2016; Wilson 2011; Salamon 1995, p. 45). The literature thus suggests that how the dominant group respond to immigrants will generate the scale of cultural activities enacted. This finding invites future studies to examine meso-level strategy cultural activities. The fact that this is the most salient strategy enacted also supports further examination.

This study addresses the puzzle in the literature wherein one set of studies demonstrates that *inclusive* contexts are positively related to protests (Burciaga and Martinez 2017; Nicholls 2014, 2021; Nicholls and de Wilde 2023). Another strand of the literature shows that *exclusionary* contexts motivate protests (de Graauw 2015; Kondo 2012). In alignment with both strands of research, results show that confrontational advocacy occurs across inclusionary and exclusionary contexts. However, the relationship between strategies and context diverges at different strategy levels, as other studies have found (e.g., Nicholls, Maussen, and de Mesquita 2016). At the meso-level, strategy *confrontational advocacy* is more frequently employed in high inclusion contexts compared to low inclusion contexts which aligns

with the former set of studies. At the micro-level, *protests* are more frequently employed in low inclusion contexts, which aligns with the latter strand of research. This finding encourages future studies on strategies to account for the multi-scalar nature of how strategies manifests in alignment with theoretical conceptualizations (Nicholls, Maussen, and de Mesquita 2016; Sorrell-Medina 2022) to optimize reliability.

This study finds that confrontational advocacy is an unpopular strategy. Only about 3 % of INOs in the U.S. employ this strategy. Although an unpopular strategy, it has grown into a field of its own. What is more perplexing is that cultural activities is overlooked although it is the most dominant strategy deployed relative to all other strategies. These results urge a call for studies to examine the cultural dimension of INOs drawing from either critical race or citizenry exclusion theories given their fruitfulness here and elsewhere. Such lines of work may help to close the knowledge gap and build new theories.

The results here have implications for nonprofits, policy, and practice. The salient role of cultural activities across the sector encourages leaders to consider this strategy to achieve its goals given its relevancy in the field. The integration of cultural activities may also be an effective segway to establish community and stakeholder relationships and achieve policy goals (Wilson 2011).

Regarding limitations, this study is partially generalizable due to the sample size. It is also limited to the study of city context. Recent research emphasizes the need for studies to examine strategies in the context of a multijurisdictional field acknowledging how different levels of government form part of the local contextual environment (Nicholls and de Wilde 2023). Future studies can address these limitations with larger sample sizes and by employing a multi-level analysis to the study of context and strategies yielding deeper insights.

Appendix A: Sample Frame of 52 U.S. Cities and Citizenry Inclusion Scores

City	State	Citizenry Inclusion Score	Category
*Lumpkin	Georgia	0.50	Very low
Jena	Louisiana	0.50	Very low
Florence	Arizona	1.25	Very low
Batavia	New York	1.25	Very low
Los Fresnos	Texas	1.50	Very low
Harlingen	Texas	1.75	Low
West Valley	Utah	1.75	Low

(continued)

City	State	Citizenry Inclusion Score	Category
Imperial	California	2.00	Low
Conroe	Texas	2.00	Low
Adelanto	California	2.25	Low
Pearsall	Texas	2.25	Low
Memphis	Tennessee	2.50	Low
El Paso	Texas	2.50	Low
Eloy	Arizona	2.75	Low
*Tucson	Arizona	2.75	Low
*Atlanta	Georgia	2.75	Low
*Omaha	Nebraska	2.75	Low
New Orleans	Louisiana	3.00	Low
Las Vegas	Nevada	3.00	Low
*Cleveland	Ohio	3.00	Low
*Orlando	Florida	3.25	Moderate
*Louisville	Kentucky	3.25	Moderate
Oakdale	Louisiana	3.25	Moderate
*Kansas City	Missouri	3.25	Moderate
Dallas	Texas	3.25	Moderate
*Tacoma	Washington	3.25	Moderate
*Phoenix	Arizona	3.50	Moderate
*Charlotte	North Carolina	3.50	Moderate
*Detroit	Michigan	3.75	Moderate
*Buffalo	New York	3.75	Moderate
*York	Pennsylvania	3.75	Moderate
Houston	Texas	4.00	Moderate
Denver	Colorado	4.25	Moderate
Bloomington	Minnesota	4.25	Moderate
*San Diego	California	4.50	Moderate
Aurora	Colorado	4.50	Moderate
*Portland	Oregon	4.50	Moderate
*San Antonio	Texas	4.50	Moderate
Arlington	Virginia	4.50	Moderate
*Seattle	Washington	4.50	Moderate
*Hartford	Connecticut	4.75	Moderate
*Miami	Florida	4.75	Moderate
Honolulu	Hawaii	4.75	Moderate
*Baltimore	Maryland	4.75	Moderate
Newark	New Jersey	4.75	Moderate
Elizabeth	New Jersey	5.00	High
*Los Angeles	California	5.25	High
*Philadelphia	Pennsylvania	5.25	High
*Boston	Massachusetts	6.00	High

(continued)

City	State	Citizenry Inclusion Score	Category
*Chicago	Illinois	6.25	High
*San Francisco	California	6.75	Very high
*New York	New York	7.25	Very high

*Denotes the city was represented in the resulting sample of INOs.

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