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FIGHT FOR THE CITY: POLICING, SANCTUARY, AND RESISTANCE IN CHICAGO

RUTH GOMBERG-MUÑOZ AND REYNA WENCES

ABSTRACT. In the months following Trump’s 2016 election as U.S. president, scores of cities across the United States instituted or reaffirmed “sanctuary” measures that impede federal immigration enforcement actions in their midst. Yet in the heart of these “sanctuary” cities, many immigrants remain vulnerable to deportation. This article describes one community campaign to identify, track, and stop a mechanism through which urban immigrants are detained and deported: data sharing between local police agencies and federal immigration officials. We draw on Kyle Walker’s (2015) framework of place, scale, and networks of local immigration politics to show how overlapping scales of immigrant policing ultimately jeopardized Chicago’s promise to be a place of immigrant sanctuary. We then describe how community organizers exploited this tension as they exposed the effects of Chicago police data sharing practices on black and Latinx Chicagoans and campaigned for a stronger city sanctuary policy.

Keywords: Chicago, deportation, immigrant rights, policing, sanctuary.

<<A-HEAD>> A TALE OF TWO CITIES

As a candidate, U.S. President Donald Trump promised to take a hard line on immigration, calling for “extreme vetting” of legal immigrants and mass deportations of millions of people living in the United States unlawfully.ⁱ In the

early days of his presidency, the Trump administration took steps to make good on those promises through a series of executive orders that escalated immigrant policing at consulates, borders, and checkpoints, as well as throughout the U.S. interior (Trump 2017a; 2017b; 2017c). In response, scores of cities across the United States instituted or reaffirmed “sanctuary” or “welcoming” policies; these vary but typically inhibit municipal agencies from collaborating with federal immigration officers (Bauder 2016). Trump’s Department of Justice (DOJ) rejoined these challenges by threatening to withhold certain federal grants from sanctuary cities until they agreed to cooperate with federal officials (Dardick 2017). This political tit for tat hardened battle lines between municipal and federal politicians over the jurisdiction of immigration enforcement, and Chicago’s mayor quickly positioned himself to lead the charge on behalf of the city.

Eight months after Trump’s inauguration, on August 6, 2017, Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel held a press conference at City Hall. Flanked by immigrant-rights supporters and prominent city politicians, Emanuel announced that the city had filed a lawsuit in federal court to block the DOJ from withholding monies from Chicago, and he vowed that Chicago would remain a “welcoming city” for immigrants that would not be “blackmailed into changing [its] values” by the DOJ (Bach 2017).

Yet even as Emanuel publicly vowed to protect Chicago immigrants, a young man from Guatemala lay alone and injured in a cell in nearby McHenry County. In March of 2017, Wilmer Catalán-Ramírez was arrested in his home on Chicago’s south side by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents

during a nationwide series of raids. After accessing Catalán-Ramírez's information from Chicago Police Department (CPD) databases, ICE agents entered his home and held him at gunpoint, breaking his shoulder as they arrested him in front of his wife and three children. Catalán-Ramírez spent the next ten months in immigrant detention at the McHenry Detention Center, where he was denied adequate medical care and placed in solitary confinement as a reprisal for community efforts to get him released.

Catalán-Ramírez's arrest by federal officials in his Chicago home as a result of information gathered by Chicago police did not defy the city's sanctuary policy. Like many sanctuary policies, Chicago's ordinance allows CPD to share information with federal agencies in cases in which a person has been charged with or convicted of a serious crime or their name appears in the city's gang database (Dardick 2017). Catalán-Ramírez had no criminal record, but he had been placed in the gang database twice by two different Chicago police officers who affiliated him with two different gangs. Catalán-Ramírez's dubious criminalization by Chicago police and subsequent exposure to deportation through CPD data sharing reveals a tale of two cities: one a bold proponent of protection for immigrants and the other a nucleus of racialized policing practices that entrap immigrant men of color like Catalán-Ramírez.

Sanctuary policies have provided fertile analytical territory for studies of complex interactions among immigrant and native-born communities, local politics, and federal systems (e.g. Bauder 2016; Darling 2013; Leitner and Strunk 2014; Ridgely 2008). These studies have complicated hegemonic understandings

of sanctuary; while sanctuary measures provide meaningful symbolic and material protection for illegalized migrants, they also strategically promote images of cosmopolitan compassion, reify distinctions between “worthy” and “unworthy” immigrants, and leave illegalized migrants vulnerable to deportation (Bauder 2016; Darling 2013; Darling and Squire 2013; Walia 2014). Thus, while sanctuary policies may impede some federal enforcement actions, they do not address root causes of migration, illegalization, or criminalization, nor do they meaningfully challenge inequitable structures of nation-state governance (Bauder 2016; Darling and Squire 2013). In Chicago, the detention of Catalán-Ramírez exposed the rift between the mayor’s moralistic proclamation of urban sovereignty, equality, and humanitarianism on the one hand, and the city’s complicity with broader systems of racialized policing on the other (see Walia 2014 for a discussion of Vancouver). As we will show, this rift both subjected urban immigrants like Catalán-Ramírez to deportation and created novel opportunities for community organizing and resistance (see also Leitner and Strunk 2014).

The purpose of this essay is to place analyses of urban sanctuary politics in conversation with analyses of urban policing systems. If cities are increasingly “factor[ies] of immigrant policing” (Ridgley 2008, 56), then how do local police carry out federal immigration enforcement measures in the context of sanctuary? How are tropes of immigrant protection reconciled with practices of racialized criminalization in sanctuary cities? And how can community organizers exploit

the tension between bold political proclamations of sanctuary and covert practices of local/federal collaboration to push against racist policing practices?

To organize our essay, we draw on Kyle Walker's 2015 argument that place, scale, and networks comprise mutually constitutive elements that together shape local immigration politics. To wit, localities draw on specific "place-based imaginaries" to craft public policy that conforms to a desired public image as they respond to descending scales of immigrant policing through local immigration ordinances. These municipal campaigns tap into national organizations and resources for support and legitimization. The result is an immigration policy landscape that resembles a patchwork quilt in which national networks connect various squares in different parts of the quilt. Thus, Walker shows how two Chicago suburbs developed widely divergent immigration politics, one inclusive and one exclusive, that accorded with their public images as progressive and welcoming, on the one hand, and as homogenously "American" on the other; each suburb is connected to "like-minded" municipalities through national networks.

Chicago, as a bulwark of progressive politics, has long promoted a public face as an immigrant sanctuary. Yet racist policing practices in the city compromise its image as welcoming and inclusive as they expose Chicago residents to federal immigration agents. The first section of this article explores this tension between Chicago's public face and its policing practices. We show how Chicago politicians invoke tropes that distinguish "good" immigrants from "bad" ones as they simultaneously declare Chicago a sanctuary and justify complicity with federal immigration enforcement. The second section

contextualizes Chicago's policing practices in broader scales of immigration politics with an overview of changes to the U.S. immigration system that have weakened the monopoly of congressional legislation over immigration policy and resulted in a proliferation of immigration-related policies at executive, state, and municipal levels (see also Darling 2017; Walker and Leitner 2011). We emphasize the tenacity of racist policing practices in each of these scales and argue that, rather than disrupt racialized immigration enforcement, Chicago's sanctuary policy allows it to persist. Finally, we focus on networks to show how this tension has enabled the spread of coalitional community organizing that effectively targets municipal policies (Leitner and Strunk 2014). We outline how, as Chicago organizers campaigned to get Catalán-Ramírez released from detention, they exposed the role of the CPD gang database in facilitating deportation of Chicago immigrants and in criminalizing black and Latinx Chicagoans more broadly. We then follow organizers as they tracked the database's digital trails into county, state, and federal systems to document the effects of an extensive, racialized policing system. Rather than treat each of these elements in isolation, we show how Chicago's scalar complicity with immigration enforcement measures represented an apparent challenge to its own place-based image as an immigrant sanctuary. This tension helped to engender collaborative grassroots networks that worked to end Chicago's gang database and pass a stronger sanctuary policy.

Our analyses draw on Reyna Wences's experiences at the center of the campaign to expose and eliminate the Chicago gang database. A cofounder of the

Immigrant Youth Justice League (IYJL), and a veteran of Not One More Deportation and other immigrant rights movements, Wences has been leading antideportation campaigns in Chicago and elsewhere in the United States for more than ten years. Wences's political knowledge and "habitus" as an antideportation organizer provide invaluable insight and expertise on issues of city policing and community organizing in relation to deportation. As an anthropologist, Ruth Gomberg-Muñoz's research focuses on understanding the effects of U.S. immigration policies on the work and home lives of undocumented people and their family members. Gomberg-Muñoz has also engaged in a variety of activities to support immigrant-rights organizing in Chicagoland, including campaigning for a municipal sanctuary bill and coauthoring policy briefs for Illinois' 2017 state sanctuary bill and 2013 driver's license bill for immigrants. These efforts have helped Gomberg-Muñoz deepen her understanding of mainstream immigrant-rights discourses, as well as their hegemonic character and profound limitations. More broadly, our focus on and support of community organizing efforts in a context of profound repression advances calls to avoid the reproduction of oversimplified tropes of victimization and, instead, to recognize, foster, and amplify the work of people engaged in sociopolitical struggle (e.g. Hale 2006; Pallares 2014; Simpson 2018).

<<A-HEAD>> CHICAGO: A SANCTUARY FOR "THOSE WHO PLAY BY THE RULES

The arrest of Catalán-Ramírez by ICE agents at his Chicago home perplexed immigrant-rights organizers at first. He had no criminal record, and he was a

resident of Chicago, a sanctuary city, in Cook County, a sanctuary county, in Illinois, which is a sanctuary state. How did ICE agents identify, locate, and arrest Catalán-Ramírez in spite of these overlapping layers of sanctuary protection? Understanding how immigrants in places like Chicago remain vulnerable to deportation requires a deeper dive into the complexity of sanctuary politics in the context of urban neoliberalism.

Sanctuary policy is not a fixed or consistent type of legislation, but rather comprises multiple potential guidelines that range in their degree of protection for immigrants (Bauder 2016). Accordingly, Serin Houston (2019) has conceptualized sanctuary as a dynamic process that continually engages the local and national contexts in which it is applied. Originally developed to provide protection for people fleeing political persecution or punishment for criminal offenses, by the 1980s, sanctuary had become associated with protection for illegalized migrants fleeing civil wars in Central America who were systematically denied asylum protections in the United States (Bauder 2016; Coutin 2000; Houston 2019). Chicago churches began declaring themselves sanctuaries for Central Americans in 1982, and Chicago Mayor Harold Washington signed the city's first executive order inhibiting city agencies from cooperating with federal immigration officials in 1985 (Rumore 2019). After reaffirming the city's status as an immigrant sanctuary, in 1992 Mayor Richard Daley amended sanctuary protections to exclude people "involved in serious crimes," a loophole that would be incorporated into later ordinances, including the one hailed by Rahm Emanuel in 2017 (Rumore 2019).

Chicago's current policy impedes ICE access to people being held in city custody, refuses to allow ICE usage of police facilities, and prohibits on-duty Chicago police officers from communicating with ICE about detainees (Dardick 2017). Chicago offers other forms of immigrant "welcome," as well, including a municipal ID, the CityKey, which allows Chicago residents access to city services no matter their immigration status (Huang and Liu 2018). Cook County, comprising Chicago and its first-ring suburbs, has its own sanctuary policy that requires jail officials to release immigrants when they are eligible for bond even if doing so defies a detainer request from ICE (Pratt and Coen 2017). Finally, the state of Illinois offers Temporary Visitor's Driver Licenses (TVDLs) to Illinoisans regardless of their immigration status and adopted its own sanctuary measure, the Trust Act, in 2017, which impedes cooperation with ICE for all state law enforcement agencies (Gomberg-Muñoz and others 2017).ⁱⁱ

In spite of the high-profile dispute between Chicago and DOJ officials, there is one thing that federal and city politicians agree on: immigrants with "criminal" records should not be protected. Chicago's sanctuary policy explicitly excludes people who have an outstanding criminal warrant, a prior felony conviction or pending felony prosecution, or who appear in the city's gang database (Peña 2017). Even as Emanuel proclaimed Chicago to be "the most immigrant-friendly city in the country," his 2017 explanation of the city's ordinance exposed the loopholes that leave many vulnerable to deportation. He declared:

This Welcoming City ordinance will make Chicago a national leader in welcoming those who play by the rules, contribute to our economy, and help make Chicago the incredible city that was envisioned by its first immigrant settlers.... This will prevent law abiding Chicagoans from being unfairly detained and deported and will ensure that Chicago is a welcoming, multicultural global city where people have access to services they need to contribute to our city.

Far from protecting all immigrants, then, Chicago's ordinance is exclusively for those who "play by the rules," are "law abiding," and "contribute to our economy." In other words, Chicago's sanctuary is meant for immigrants who can best embody a neoliberal conceptualization of ideal citizenship (Bauder 2016). Further, by painting Chicago as a "multicultural global city," Emanuel used sanctuary politics to assert a cosmopolitan public image for the city, a boon to the profile of his mayorship (Darling and Squire 2013). As the group Organized Communities Against Deportation (OCAD) asserted, "it is clear that the primary purpose of the lawsuit filed by the City of Chicago [against the DOJ] is not to defend the rights of undocumented Chicagoans but to preserve federal funding for the Chicago Police Department and bolster Mayor Emanuel's national image as a champion of immigrants" (2017c). And far from critiquing aggressive policing, Chicago's sanctuary policies evoke the argument that sanctuary helps city police because it increases trust between law enforcement officers and the communities

they police (e.g. Gomberg-Muñoz and others 2017; Office of the Mayor 2012). In sum, the implementation and reaffirmation of Chicago’s sanctuary policy allowed city politicians to cultivate political capital for being “immigrant-friendly” without seriously challenging broader racialized categories or systems of governance, or even policing practices within their own city.

Indeed, Catalán-Ramírez was all of the things that Emanuel praised in his speech: a worker, a tax-payer, and a long-term Chicagoan with a “clean” criminal record. He is also the father of three U.S. citizen children. None of these factors prevented his arrest and detention by ICE. As we show below, Catalán-Ramírez’s very presence in his Chicago community precluded his ability to be “law abiding” and under the protection of the city’s sanctuary policy.

<<A-HEAD>> SCALES OF RACIALIZED IMMIGRANT POLICING

What had Catalán-Ramírez done to be excluded from sanctuary protection? He was pulled over repeatedly by Chicago police while he was driving. Even though Catalán-Ramírez was never arrested nor charged with a crime, two different officers added his name to the CPD gang database; they neither notified Catalán-Ramírez of his inclusion nor offered any evidence of his putative gang affiliation. The criminalization of Catalán-Ramírez via the gang database is part of a broader pattern of racialized policing that disproportionately targets black and brown Chicagoans, as we will show below. But first, we contextualize Chicago policing practices with a discussion of discriminatory enforcement systems that pervade immigrant policing and traverse scales from the federal to the local.

In the federal system, Latinx immigrants are disproportionately likely to be detained and deported from the United States (Golash Boza and Hondagneu-Sotelo 2013). Immigrants from Latin America, about 75 percent of the undocumented population, have accounted for over 90 percent of deportees each year since 2000 (Fussell 2011; U.S. Department of Homeland Security 2017). Mexicans alone make up 59 percent of the undocumented population, but constituted between 65–80 percent of deportees between 2000 and 2009 (Fussell 2011; Passel and Cohn 2009). Deportations reached their zenith under the Barack Obama administration (2008--2016), which oversaw record high rates of deportations known as removals. In 2013, the annual U.S. deportation rate peaked at a historical high of 434,015 (Migration Policy Institute 2017), then declined some as Obama, facing mounting pressure from immigrant-rights activists, rolled back aggressive enforcement campaigns and issued an executive order known as DACA that protected some undocumented youth from deportation.

In his first ten days in office, Trump reinstated and expanded the enforcement apparatus responsible for mass deportations during the Obama period. In addition to implementing a travel ban and “extreme vetting” of visa applicants from select Muslim-majority nations, Trump issued executive orders that expand the category of persons in the United States who are a priority for deportation from those convicted of a serious crime to those who are convicted or charged with a crime, suspected of a crime, or suspected of fraud or being a threat to public safety. In effect, this change renders all of the 10 million illegalized people living in the United States priorities for deportation. As a result, in the first

nine months of 2017, ICE agents arrested three times the number of “non-criminal” immigrants over the same period in 2016 (Miroff 2017). The orders also expand a process known as “expedited removal,” in which people who cannot prove that they have lived in the United States for at least two years can be deported by their arresting immigration officer without ever attending a deportation hearing or seeing an immigration judge. They also tighten criteria for asylum, expand the immigrant detention system, and mandate construction of an expanded wall along the U.S.–Mexican border (Trump 2017a; 2017b; 2017c). Finally, on September 5, 2017, the Trump administration sought to end the DACA program and remove the limited protections that it had provided for undocumented youth.

While unauthorized presence in the United States is a civil violation and not a crime, along the U.S.–Mexico border region, illegalized migrants have been increasingly subject to federal criminal prosecution for unlawful entry and reentry. Between 1992 and 2012, the number of federal convictions for unlawful reentry into the United States increased 28-fold, from 690 cases in 1992 to 19,462 in 2012. By 2012, people convicted of unlawful reentry, a felony, made up 26 percent of all sentenced federal offenders, and they spent an average of two years in prison prior to deportation. Three-quarters of all criminal prosecutions for unlawful entry and reentry occurred in just five southern districts, all of which are located on the U.S.-Mexico border (Light and others 2014). Because these prosecutions are concentrated in the Southwest border region, they disproportionately ensnare Latin American entrants, and the share of Latinos

among federally sentenced offenders rose from 23 percent in 1992 to 48 percent in 2012 (Light and others 2014). In the summer of 2018, the Trump administration issued a “zero tolerance” policy at the U.S.-Mexico border that mandated criminal prosecution of all border crossers and resulted in scores of children being forcibly separated from their migrant parents. Criminal prosecution for unlawful entry and reentry is the latest iteration of the long-standing concentration of immigration enforcement measures on the U.S.--Mexico border, a practice that has disproportionately saddled Mexican and other Latin American migrants with criminal records (De Genova 2004; Gomberg-Muñoz 2015; Heyman 2016; Massey 2009; Sabo and others 2014).

This criminalization is not confined to the border region but has proliferated throughout the U.S. interior through collaborative programs between local police agencies and federal immigration officials. The most pervasive of these is the “Secure Communities” program, funded by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security since in 2006. Secure Communities links the databases of local police agencies and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). When people are arrested in a “Secure” community, their fingerprints are run through the DHS database, and if there is a “hit” (often the result of being caught at the border), arrestees can be deported whether or not they are ever charged with or convicted of a crime. In fact, even though -ICE- states that it targets “criminal aliens,” about half of those deported are never convicted of any crime, and many deportations result from simple traffic stops (Coleman 2012; Golash-Boza and Hondagneu-Sotelo 2013). Bowling

to pressure from immigrant-rights activists, the Obama administration replaced Secure Communities with a more “targeted” program in 2012. In his first days in office, Trump reinstated Secure Communities, and in so doing sought to ensure that contact with police anywhere in the United States can result in an undocumented person’s deportation.

Enlisting local police agencies in immigration enforcement has had the effect of reinforcing, not ameliorating, disproportionate deportation rates of Latin Americans. In fact, even though Latinos constitute about 75 percent of the total undocumented immigrant population, they comprised 93 percent of those detained through the Secure Communities program in 2011 (Kohli and others 2011).

Evidence for racial profiling of Latinos in areas where local police cooperate with immigration enforcement has been found in Arizona (Romero 2008), Illinois (Mahr and McCoppin 2009), Tennessee (Lacayo 2010), North Carolina (Coleman 2012; Golash-Boza and Hondagneu-Sotelo 2013), and Texas (Gardner and Kohli 2009). This evidence suggests that discriminatory local policing practices in the U.S. interior have helped to drive racialized inequities in federal deportation rates (Gomberg-Muñoz 2015), and it indicates that the criminalization of Mexicans and other Latin Americans persists far outside of the U.S.--Mexico border region (Chavez 2008; De Genova 2004).

Immigration politics have increasingly become incorporated into state and municipal policies. Nearly 1,600 pieces of immigration legislation were introduced at state capitols in the first eight months of 2011 alone, an all-time record (National Conference of State Legislatures 2011). Punitive immigration

policies have been enacted in Alabama, Arizona, Georgia, and South Carolina, while more “immigrant-friendly” bills granting in-state college tuition or driver’s licenses to undocumented immigrants have been implemented in California, Connecticut, Illinois, and Colorado. Immigration policymaking has also broken the confines of federal and state legislative bodies and proliferated at the local level. Between 2006 and March 2011, ordinances targeting illegalized immigrants had been passed and/or considered in over 130 U.S. cities (Varsanyi 2011). These policies seek to regulate and persecute everyday behaviors associated with illegalized people, and they range from English-only laws to limits on the number of adults who can reside in a household to bans on sitting in public spaces. Conversely, cities such as Chicago and states such as California and Illinois have implemented their own versions of “welcoming” or “sanctuary” policies, which seek to offer a modicum of protection for undocumented people. Together, these diverse policies—some hostile and some friendly—create a patchwork landscape that renders municipal and state politics increasingly significant in the lives of undocumented immigrants and their family members (Bauder 2016; Darling 2017; Quesada and others 2014; Ridgely 2008; Walker 2015).

These interwoven scales of immigrant policing have several significant implications. First, they have increased racialized criminalization of illegalized migrants, burdening ever more Latin American migrants with felony records, prolonged prison sentences, and family separation prior to deportation (Gomberg-Muñoz 2015). Second and relatedly, they link local policing practices with federal immigration enforcement, implicating even “sanctuary” cities such as Chicago in

the detention and deportation of immigrants. Third, they create contested jurisdictional terrains and open up new possibilities for community organizing, which we turn to next.

CHICAGO'S GANG DATABASE<<A-HEAD>> CHICAGO'S GANG DATABASE

During the raid on their home, Catalán-Ramírez's wife Celene Adame recorded her husband's arrest on her cell phone and broadcast the video on social media as she sought support for his case. Soon after, she contacted the Chicago group Organized Communities Against Deportation (OCAD), which spearheaded a campaign to get Catalán-Ramírez released. As part of this campaign, OCAD members sought to figure out how Catalán-Ramírez had come to be targeted by ICE agents in the first place. After identifying the role of CPD's gang database in his detention, OCAD formed a coalition with the Black Youth Project 100 (BYP 100), national political organization Mijente, and the Policing in Chicago Research Group at the University of Illinois at Chicago, led by sociologist Andy Clarno. Together, the coalition members embarked on a project to learn more about how the gang database makes immigrants vulnerable to deportation in spite of the city's sanctuary policy.

The coalition learned that Catalán-Ramírez was targeted by immigration agents after Chicago police placed him in the gang database and shared this information with ICE. ICE then used CPD's database to find Catalán-Ramírez's address and carry out the raid on his home. They further learned that Chicago's sanctuary ordinance specifically allows for such information sharing between

CPD and ICE. Organizers had long suspected that Chicago police were complicit in facilitating ICE raids; now they had evidence of one mechanism through which such collaboration occurs.

The Chicago Police Department has kept and populated iterations of a gang database since the 1980s (Dumke 2018). In the earlier stages of this list, CPD officers would rely on contact cards, pencil, and paper to keep records of suspected gang members. The surge of technology and algorithms to identify patterns of violence gave birth to the expansion of the city's gang database in the early 2000s. This technology allowed police officers to centralize information on gang affiliation, which feeds lists that can be accessed by government and law enforcement agencies outside of the City of Chicago.

The coalition uncovered troubling information about Chicago's gang database. First, people can be added to the database at the discretion of Chicago police officers who are not required to provide any evidence of gang affiliation or criminal activity; indeed, 67.5 percent of people designated as gang members in the database have no recent arrest record involving violence or weapons (Policing in Chicago Research Group 2018). As we mention above, Catalán-Ramírez had been placed in the database by two different officers who identified him with two different gangs; there was no evidence of his affiliation with either. Second, people are not notified when they are placed in the database and have no mechanism to contest their inclusion. Catalán-Ramírez found out he was included in the CPD gang database only after ICE had arrested and detained him.

Third, the gang database is entangled in a web of myriad local and extra-local databases that obscure the reliability of data and make it difficult to trace and remove erroneous information. For example, even after city officials admitted that Catalán-Ramírez’s addition to the gang database was erroneous, they said they could “modify” his records but not remove them (Organized Communities Against Deportation 2017b). And since there is no oversight of CPD’s data-sharing practices with other agencies, misinformation can be spread throughout databases across the country. Indeed, a 2019 report by Chicago’s Office of the Inspector General (OIG) concluded that over 500 intergovernmental agencies have access to the information in the city’s gang database (Office of Inspector General 2019), extending the implications of city policing practices far beyond its political boundaries.

Finally, the database overwhelmingly labels black and Latinx Chicagoans as “gang affiliated”: of the nearly 128,000 Chicagoans in the database, more than 95 percent are black or Latinx (Policing in Chicago Research Group 2018). In sum, CPD’s practice of gang designation disproportionately criminalizes black and Latinx people in the city without due process. For U.S. citizens, inclusion into the city’s gang database has adverse consequences that include the denial of employment and housing. For undocumented people like Catalán-Ramírez, inclusion in the gang database can result in deportation.

Investigating Catalán-Ramírez’s case helped community organizers uncover the criminalization of black and Latinx communities and expose the complicity of Chicago policing practices in mass deportation. It also showed that

the implications of CPD actions penetrate data bases that reach across the country. These racist policing practices are not impeded by the city's sanctuary policy; indeed, Chicago's policy explicitly allows for such consequences. As we show next, organizers were able to use this information to push for an end to the gang database and for a stronger sanctuary policy with no loopholes. Indeed, the gang database rendered two networks relevant: one a vast digital system of criminalization that follows targeted Chicagoans across the country, and the other an emergent community network that seeks to address overlapping scales of immigrant policing.

<<A-HEAD>> FIGHTING FOR THE CITY

The contradiction between the mayor's public avowal of Chicago's sanctuary status and the police department's practices of criminalization and cooperation with ICE brought together antideportation and antipolice brutality organizers to push for changes in city politics from 2016 to 2018. Building on their collaborative research, black and undocumented Latinx organizers formed the Erase the Chicago Gang Database coalition. The coalition challenged the legality of CPD's gang database by pointing out that being a member of a gang is not a crime under the law. The campaign also exposed the hypocrisy of CPD claims to protect public safety by showing that people added to the gang database were rendered unsafe by their gang designation. People in the gang database were often denied public resources and services, and were subject to more aggressive

policing, further compromising their well-being and that of their family and community members.

The coalition's efforts to publicize the negative effects of the database soon yielded public policy results. In March 2018, the OIG in Chicago announced that it would begin an investigation into the gang database. During a meeting with the coalition to Erase the Gang Database, the head of the OIG stated that his office's investigation was prompted by the coalition's findings and the public campaign to stop Catalán-Ramírez's deportation. During the spring and summer of 2018, the OIG collaborated with community organizations to host listening sessions in predominantly black and Latinx neighborhoods with a high density of gang designations.

The listening sessions served as a space for community members to share the impact that inclusion in the database had had on their lives. These stories painted a grim picture of the long-term negative impacts of inclusion in the Chicago gang database, including police harassment, hypersurveillance, barriers to accessing public housing and employment, and harsher treatment in court. During a listening session hosted in one predominantly Latinx immigrant neighborhood, a mother described being added to the database as a teenager and said that she feared that her children were also in the database; she spoke anonymously for fear of reprisal by CPD officers. Other community members reported that Chicago police officers often stop people, including Catalán-Ramírez, who are driving or hanging around in their own neighborhoods, criminalizing their very presence in public.

In addition to the listening sessions, members of the coalition organized a series of teach-ins across the city. These events were used by organizers to share information about the database, give campaign updates, amplify calls to action, and provide opportunities for people to join in the campaign. One important component of the teach-ins was the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) clinic, which offered instruction and support for people who wished to request their records from CPD to check whether their name was listed in the gang database. The documents obtained through FOIA requests include information on gang designation based on arrest cards and investigatory stops, and they can help expose inconsistencies in CPD's arrest records.

As a result of coalitional campaigning, on June 18, 2018, the MacArthur Justice Center at Northwestern University's School of Law submitted a federal lawsuit against the City of Chicago and the Chicago Police Department for unconstitutional use of the gang database. Community organizations flooded the 5th floor of Chicago's city hall to announce the lawsuit and urge the City Council to act. The suit was filed on behalf of several community groups and four individual plaintiffs, three black and one Latinx, who were falsely identified as gang members. The lawsuit demanded that the City of Chicago and CPD create a process to notify people who have been added to the database, stop the practice of gang designation, and stop the sharing of the database. As of October of 2019, the lawsuit is stalled in the U.S. District Court of Northeastern Illinois after multiple requests for delay by city attorneys.

While the short-term goal of the lawsuit was to resolve demands brought by the plaintiffs, coalition organizers also used the court hearings to raise awareness about the gang database and mobilize community members in its opposition. For example, organizers filled the courtrooms with residents and led meetings that encouraged city residents to press their City Council members to pass a temporary ordinance prohibiting CPD from adding people to the database. By the fall of 2018, it became clear to advocates that the administration of Mayor Rahm Emanuel would not support the ordinance. Still, criticism of racist Chicago policing practices, including the murder of Lacquan McDonald and the mayor's complicity in its cover up, pushed Emanuel to decline a run for reelection and led to his replacement in 2019.

Since then, attention and opposition to gang databases has grown, resulting in the decommission of a gang database maintained by Cook County after an investigative audit in 2019. The coalition demanded access to the database prior to its destruction, and its research revealed problems and errors in the county data similar to those found in the city. Community organizers also used momentum surrounding the database campaign to shape the 2019 municipal election cycle, in which 10 of 50 newly elected city council members pledged to support the campaign to erase the gang database.

In addition to efforts to eliminate the gang database, coalition leaders pressured Chicago politicians to pass a stronger sanctuary policy with no loopholes (Organized Communities Against Deportation 2017a). In July of 2019, members of the immigration working group, including OCAD, introduced an

amendment to eliminate the loopholes from Chicago's sanctuary policies, and 31 Chicago aldermen pledged their support. However, Chicago's new mayor, Lori Lightfoot, has yet to eliminate the sanctuary policy loopholes in spite of promises to do so during her mayoral campaign. Lightfoot cites the city's ongoing litigation with Trump's DOJ as the impediment to a stronger sanctuary policy. In the meantime, ICE continues to access Chicago residents whose information is in the gang database.

While limited in scope and effectiveness, these coalitional campaigns have had important implications. First, their research revealed one mechanism through which people are detained and deported from "sanctuary" zones that should ostensibly protect them, and it used this information to ratchet-up political pressure on city politicians (Organized Communities Against Deportation. 2017a). Second, in identifying a practice of racialized criminalization that disproportionately affects black and Latinx communities alike, the coalition found common interests and forged common cause among communities that are often painted as being at odds. Third, they were able to mobilize diverse swaths of Chicagoans to oppose the database and challenge normative assumptions about law and safety. Fourth, the coalition's efforts exposed the hypocrisy of city politics and had reverberations at the level of the city and the county. Finally, their campaign illustrated the power of community campaigns to identify, address, and respond to shifting scales of immigrant policing (see also Leitner and Strunk 2014; Pallares and Gomberg-Muñoz 2016; Walia 2014).

<<A-HEAD>> CONCLUSIONS

In May of 2017, Catalán-Ramírez's wife Adame filed a federal civil rights lawsuit against the City of Chicago, CPD, McHenry Detention Center, and ICE over her husband's arrest and detention. After being held in detention for ten months, Catalán-Ramírez accepted a deal from ICE: he would be released from detention and able to remain in the United States while his U-visa application was processed in exchange for dropping the lawsuit. To date, Catalán-Ramírez is waiting for his visa application to be processed and, in the meantime, he must check in regularly with ICE.

Our attention to the interactions of Chicago's place-making politics as an immigrant sanctuary and its multiscalar immigrant-policing practices shows how Chicago politicians simultaneously painted a public image as an immigrant sanctuary vis-à-vis sanctuary policy and supported federal enforcement programs vis-à-vis data sharing technologies. In so doing, they created an apparent contradiction that organizers were able to identify and mobilize against. Moreover, we show how this apparent contradiction helped give rise to novel community organizing networks, created at the local level, that sought to shift local public policy.

In sum, what began as an urgent effort to stop Catalán-Ramírez's deportation led to a sustained coalitional campaign to redress systemic racism in Chicago policing practices. As organizers exposed the underlying biases that disproportionately implicate black and Latinx Chicagoans in the criminal justice system, they also exposed the role of CDP policing in casting a deportation

dragnet that penetrates the heart of this “sanctuary” city. In so doing, they drew attention to the hypocrisy of city politicians who vowed to protect immigrants as they allowed criminalization to persist. Moreover, organizers tracked the implications of CPD criminalization all the way to federal agencies and uncovered a significant mechanism of mass deportation. As organizers tracked the scope and extent of the database’s reach, they adapted their political strategies to pressure relevant policymakers--not federal legislators in charge of immigration law, but municipal officials who craft ostensibly immigrant-friendly policy—to change public policy. At a time in which antideportation organizers were unlikely to find support in legislative or executive channels, they adjusted to interwoven scales of immigration enforcement measures by targeting municipal politicians and policies. This flexibility allowed activists to gain significant momentum toward protecting Chicago immigrants from deportation at a time of heightened policing and repression of immigrant communities.

NOTES

(PLEASE CORRECT NOTES TO READ AS NUMERALS.)

1. In this essay, we use the term “immigrant” to refer to non-citizens born outside of but currently residing in the United States, regardless of their legal status. This usage is problematic, since “immigrant” technically presupposes legal admission to the United States for purposes of permanent residency. Nevertheless, when we are speaking of people who are settled in the United States for the long-term, we avoid “migrant” because it gives an impression of

mobility or transience. Following common usage in the immigrant rights movement, we use the term “undocumented” to describe people living in the United States without a lawful immigration status or with a temporary or conditional status, such as DACA. Following Bauder 2016, we use “illegalized” to refer to the exercise of state power on people who are denied lawful status.

2. The degree to which these policies have deterred federal immigration enforcement measures of the Trump administration is somewhat debatable. To date, organizers in Chicago report that a variety of measures, including sanctuary policies and community resistance, has blunted the severity of raids that have devastated immigrant communities in other areas of the country (Pratt and Coen 2017). Yet, the Trump administration has also repeatedly threatened to target sanctuary cities with additional enforcement programs and personnel.

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