

Complexities of Policy Co-Occurrence: An Analysis of Immigrant-Related Sanctuary Policies in U.S. Counties for Use in Epidemiologic Research

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Danielle M. Crookes¹, Tarik Benmarhnia²

¹Northeastern University, Boston, MA, USA, ²University of California San Diego, San Diego, CA, USA

BACKGROUND

Immigrant-related policies determine the protections and benefits available to immigrants in the U.S.

Sanctuary policies limit local law enforcement's cooperation with federal immigration enforcement.

Policies often co-occur¹ and may have synergistic effects on health.

- Existing studies examine individual policies or use summary indices, but rarely examine policy clusters.

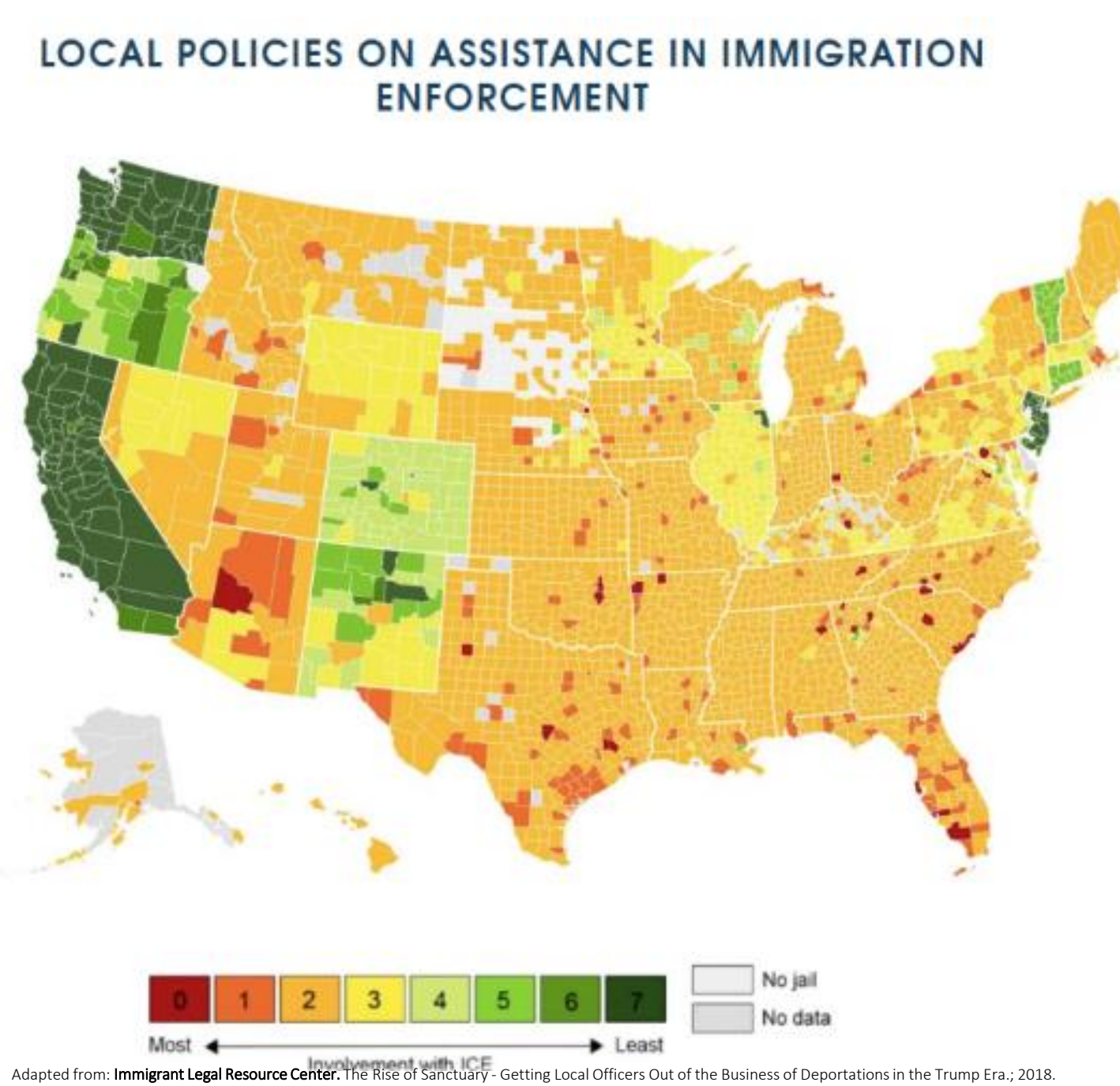
AIM

Describe patterns of co-occurrence of county-level sanctuary policies to propose meaningful categorizations for research.

METHODS

Data: Immigrant Legal Resource Center's (ILRC) 2017 data on seven sanctuary policies in county jails (n=2,956 counties).

Approach: Content and statistical descriptive analyses to identify potential policy clusters.



RESULTS (CONTINUED)

Policy Co-Occurrence

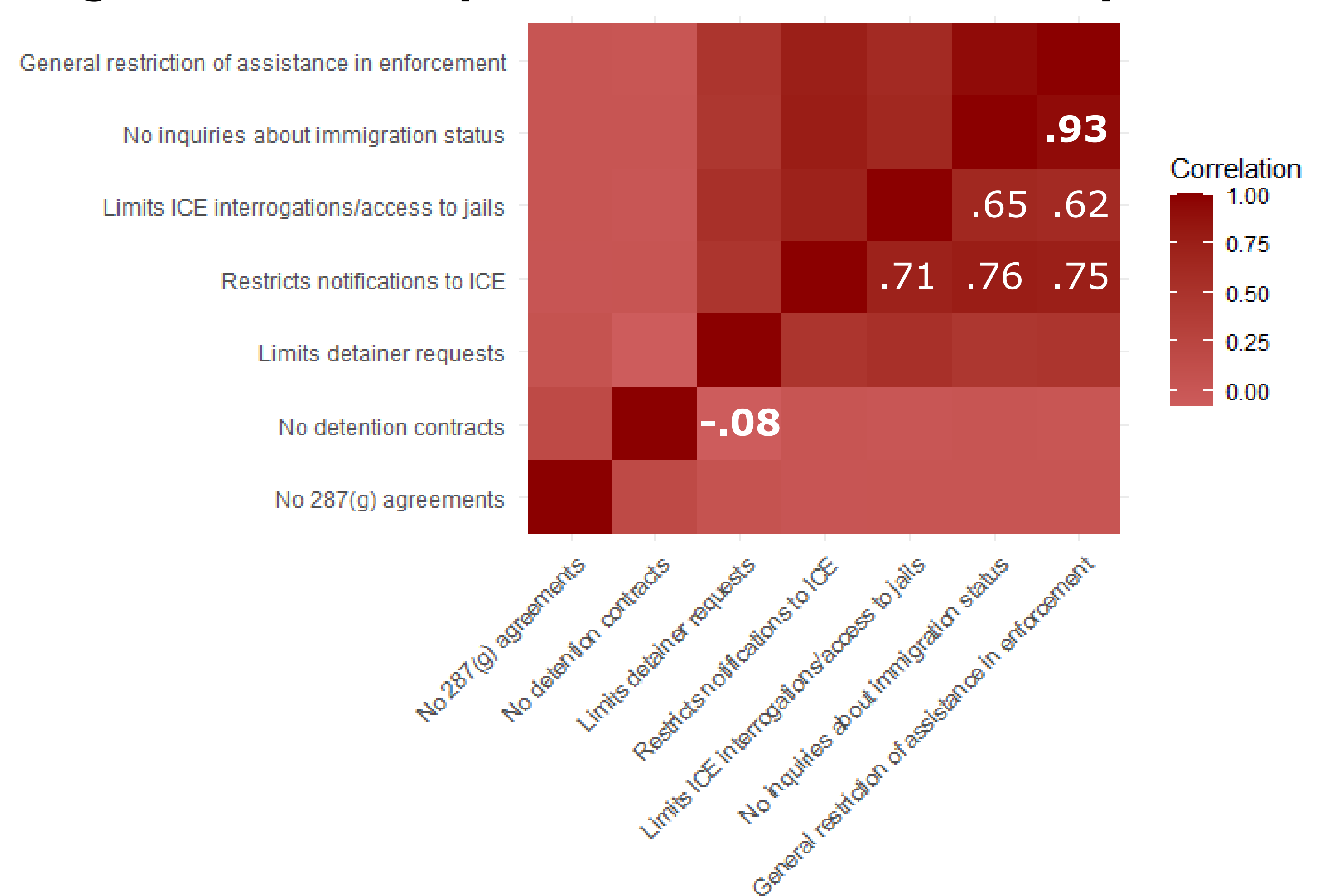
It is common to have multiple policies in place.

- 95% of counties had more than one policy
- 73% had two policies

Only three policies were found in isolation:

- 3% of counties (n=100) with no 287(g) agreements
- 2% (n = 52) with no detention contracts
- 0.1% (n =2) with limits on ICE detainer requests

Figure 1. Heatmap of correlations between policies



RESULTS

Four Types of Policies

Federal-Local Contracts (One or both: 99% of counties)

- No 287(g) agreements (local law enforcement not deputized to carry out federal immigration enforcement)
- No immigration detention contracts (federal government does not rent beds from county jails for detention)

ICE Detainers and Notifications (22% of counties)

- Limits detainer requests (limits on holding individuals for Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE))
- Restricts notifications to ICE (no information sharing)

Interrogations by ICE or local law enforcement (9% of counties)

- Limits on ICE access to jails and interrogations in jails.
- No inquiries about immigration status.

General Restriction (6% of counties)

- General prohibition of local law enforcement's participation in immigration enforcement.

Possible Categorizations for Use in Research

- Continuous policy index (policy environment)
- High vs. low policy environment (3+ vs. 0-2) (dichotomy based on distribution of policies)
- Statistically correlated policies (policies likely to co-occur)
- Individual policies (only for federal-local contract policies)
- Federal-local contract policies vs. all other policies (distinctions by policy typology and prevalence)

CONCLUSIONS

The prevalence of county-level sanctuary policy co-occurrence makes studies of individual policies challenging.

Policy indices and clusters of statistically correlated policies are recommended when studying sanctuary policies and health.

¹Matthay EC, Hagan E, Joshi S, et al. The revolution will be hard to evaluate: how co-occurring policy changes affect research on the health effects of social policies. *Epidemiol Rev.* 2021;43(1):19-32.

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Email: D.Crookes@northeastern.edu

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No Conflicts of Interest