U6614 Project Deliverable #1

Research question(s)

Sanctuary (or "safe") cities seek, among other objectives, to reduce the number of non-criminal deportations. Does this work? 💬

Why do we care?

We care because this research question represents a direct assessment of the success of sanctuary policies at reaching their stated objective. If data were to show that the policy were successful at reducing non-criminal deportations, that would be evidence to continue pursuing such policies. If data showed the opposite, that would suggest policymakers should reevaluate their methods.

Describe potential data source(s)

ICE publishes yearly deportation data broken down by criminal and non-criminal, and disaggregated across more than 20 field offices. This provides the Y-variable. For the X-variable (status as a sanctuary city), we would consult lists such as that provided by the Center for Immigration Studies (CIS) and match them up with the field offices designated by ICE. We would then research each case to identify in what year the city adopted the sanctuary policies, in order to establish year ranges for time periods in our difference-in-differences analysis.

For your input data: state the unit of observation, representative population, key limitations.

- Unit of observation: city
- Representative population: US cities that have ICE field offices associated with them
- Key limitations: not all sanctuary policies will be exactly the same across cities; some field office cities may not align perfectly with city jurisdictions for sanctuary policies
- We will also need to identify some control variables and then find relevant data for them.

Describe your empirical strategy

Using a difference-in-differences approach, we would compare cities that have recently adopted sanctuary policies (treatment) and cities that have not (control), both before and after the treated cities adopted the policies, to analyze whether those treated cities have indeed witnessed reductions in non-criminal deportations.