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Ethnic competition theory provides considerable insight into the localized contexts within which ethnic solidarities intensify and contribute to increased conflict, but gives less guidance as to how the spatial dynamics of such contexts impact the rise of sustained ethnic mobilization. Using the case of the Civil Rights–era Ku Klux Klan in North Carolina, the authors show that threat/competition dynamics were tied to distinct dimensions of spatial context and then root these spatial effects in social processes. Specifically, the authors demonstrate that mobilization was facilitated by the presence of opportunities for connections within and across counties, through which information about the klan could spread to other aggrieved individuals. These findings suggest that more attention be paid to the mesolevel contexts within which reactive political contention emerges.

Ethnic competition theory has gained broad purchase in the social sciences, providing a powerful explanation for a range of political action, from riots to voting behavior to the rise of ethnic collective identity. By “emphasiz[ing] the fact that race and ethnic competition for scarce resources lies at the heart of ethnic collective action” (Olzak, Shanahan, and

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West 1994, p. 200), the theory serves as a compelling account of the rise of ethnically organized grievances. Unlike classical grievance-based collective behavior models, which viewed noninstitutional political action as an attempt to alleviate the “anxiety” produced by structural “strain,” the competition perspective importantly views contention as an instrumental product of perceived threats to the status of majority ethnic groups.

However, while ethnic competition research has effectively elucidated the localized contexts within which such threat-based action emerges, it provides less insight into the ways in which the spatial dynamics of these contexts impact how threats translate into mobilization. Careful attention to these sociospatial settings for grievance formation requires an explicit conceptualization of the boundaries of populations impacted by threats to prevailing power relations. Empirical studies of ethnic competition have found that emergent threats affect a broad self-identified collective, rather than necessarily only the individuals whose status in the labor market or other venues are directly threatened (Belanger and Pinard 1991). But alongside this recognition of the salience of ethnic group identification in the mobilization of contention, most research has conceptualized threat endogenously—that is, as arising from competition generated solely by dynamics within a chosen unit of analysis. Defining threat as a localized product assumes that individuals define and act on grievances rooted in their immediate environments (the structural characteristics of their respective communities, counties, states, nations, etc.) as if they are independent entities, unaffected by surrounding units.

However, it appears reasonable to assume that the structural makeup of spatial units exhibits some degree of interdependence with other constituent units, and also that relationships, arrangements, and events in adjoining units hold some salience for local residents. Most studies of racist activity have not explicitly addressed the role played by these sorts of contextual effects, though the analogous issue of spatial diffusion—the fact that outcomes in a particular spatial unit may have a significant impact on surrounding units as well—has been the focus of recent research (McVeigh, Myers, and Sikkink 2004; Tolnay, Deane, and Beck 1996). Here, we extend such work by focusing on three distinct dimensions of spatial context, examining how, net of localized structural factors, each dimension impacts the patterning of threat-based, or reactive, movement activity.

First, we loosen the untenable assumption that spatial units are independent and examine the extent to which perceived threats to the status quo are produced by demographic, economic, and political dynamics within a given spatial unit as well as by the distribution of such factors within a constellation of surrounding units. Second, following the studies cited above, we test whether local mobilization exhibits a contagion pattern, with the presence of a Ku Klux Klan (KKK) unit in one area in-
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creasing the likelihood of other units existing nearby. Finally, we root the spatial diffusion of klan activity in social processes, recognizing that recruitment to the klan was not merely the amorphous crystallization of common grievances, but a process that required the linking of individuals through established communication channels.

The empirical case we use throughout is the United Klans of America (UKA) in North Carolina counties during the mid-1960s. The UKA was by far the largest KKK group existing in the United States at that time, and its organization in North Carolina is a largely unexplored but especially interesting case, as the group grew from a handful of adherents in one area of the state to an estimated 10,000 dues-paying members in less than three years. By 1966, the state had more UKA members than the rest of the South combined (U.S. House of Representatives 1967). More generally, KKK activity is perhaps the quintessential case of a reactive movement, as its rise was in clear response to threats to existing political, economic, and cultural alignments rather than an explicit challenge to status quo power relations.2 The analysis here is an extension, rather than a refutation, of previous research that suggests that the patterning of reactive mobilization is a direct response to macrolevel structural factors (Beck 2000; McVeigh 1999; Van Dyke and Soule 2002). Our goal is to understand more fully the settings that mediate these structural factors and the enactment of grievance-based mobilization.

ETHNIC COMPETITION THEORY

Ethnic competition theory builds on Barth’s (1969) emphasis on the socially constructed boundaries through which ethnic groups ascribe difference. Competition, stemming from overlap in the economic activities of multiple ethnic groups, becomes a key mechanism through which particular boundaries are reinforced. This enhanced salience of ethnic divisions, in turn, can contribute to the emergence of ethnic conflict (Hannan 1979; Olzak 1992). Most early attempts to model the theory only indirectly captured these competition dynamics, by focusing on the relationship between various dimensions of modernization and ethnic mobilization,

1 Reactive movements sometimes have been viewed almost interchangeably with right-wing or conservative movements. In our view, the key distinguishing characteristic is not political ideology, but the fact that reactive movements are threat based, mobilizing in response to perceived impending shifts in political, economic, or cultural conditions (see also Van Dyke and Soule 2002, p. 499). In many cases, this defining characteristic is equivalent to what is frequently referred to as a countermovement (see Lo 1982; Meyer and Staggenborg 1996), though we stress that reactive movements can emerge in response to shifts in the polity or public generally rather than only to organized movement activity.
though Olzak (1992) and others have since refined such analyses by capturing direct measures of labor market competition. The basic premise underlying this tradition is that when competing groups occupy similar positions in the labor market, thus exhibiting considerable niche overlap, ethnic solidarities intensify and contribute to increased competition-based conflict.

This competition dynamic has been tied to a wide range of outcomes. “Ethnic mobilization” has been conceptualized broadly, incorporating institutional political action such as voting behavior (Hechter 1975; Leifer 1981; Medrano 1994); noninstitutional political action including riots, protests, and other forms of political violence (Bergeson and Herman 1998; Brown and Boswell 1997; Shanahan and Olzak 1999; Wilkes and Okamoto 2002); and subjective identification with particular ethnic categories (Ono 2002). In most cases, intergroup competition or threat is conceptualized as economic, consistent with the centrality of labor market dynamics in theoretical formulations of ethnic conflict. However, Blalock (1967) and others have emphasized the unique impacts of politically rooted threats, and more recent studies have also focused on demographic, ecological, and cultural dynamics (Bergeson and Herman 1998; Olzak 1990; Wilkes and Okamoto 2002). In a racialized setting such as the Civil Rights-era South, threat has been captured most commonly by demographic proxies; the percentage of nonwhite residents in a particular spatial unit, for example, provides an estimate of the level of threat faced by whites (Fossett and Kiecolt 1989; Quillian 1995, 1996; Tolnay, Beck, and Massey 1989). Employing a similar competition-based logic, other studies have conceptualized these threats multidimensionally, focusing on perceived or actual economic, political, and social gains by African-Americans and other racial or ethnic groups (Beck 2000; James 1988; McVeigh 1999; Olzak 1992; Van Dyke and Soule 2002).

Belanger and Pinard (1991) note that the clear findings in much of this research are potentially due to selection effects. That is, while instances of conflict seem necessarily to be preceded by the emergence of competition, it is not a given that all competitive contexts will generate conflict. In response, they reformulate the key question in the literature—Does competition breed conflict?—to interrogate the conditions under which this causal relationship can occur. They suggest that for competition to evolve into conflict, one necessary mediating factor is whether or not the

3 Olzak (1992) is sensitive to this issue as well, and she carefully outlines a variety of factors that mediate the relationship between competition and conflict. An alternative strategy to account for the effect of selection bias is to examine variance in ethnic conflict across a large number of cases, directly comparing those in which conflict is altogether absent as well as present in varying degrees. Beck (2000), Brown and Boswell (1997), and Van Dyke and Soule (2002) employ this strategy, and we do here as well.
competition is perceived as unfair. This dimension clearly links to framing processes emphasized in the social movements literature (Benford and Snow 2000) and moves us one step in the direction of understanding the contexts within which competition translates into contention.

More fully emphasizing how various material and relational resources are deployed in ways that mediate these contexts and outcomes—a dimension central to the resource mobilization approach to social movement activity (Edwards and McCarthy 2004)—can move us further. Here, we draw on this tradition to examine how structural settings for the emergence of threat/competition translate into sustained contentious mobilization. Doing so requires that we think more seriously about the significance of the spatial patterning of reactive movement organizations.

SPACE AND CONTENTION
In a 2001 volume designed to engage various “silences” that exist within current work on contentious politics, William Sewell (2001, pp. 51–52) observes that “most studies bring in spatial considerations only episodically, when they seem important either for adequate description of contentious political events or for explaining why particular events occurred or unfolded as they did. With rare exceptions, the literature has treated space as an assumed and unproblematised background, not as a constituent aspect of contentious politics that must be conceptualized explicitly and probed systematically.” Similarly, several recent articles (Hedström 1994; Martin and Miller 2003; Miller 2000; Tilly 2000; Tolnay et al. 1996) have called for increased attention to spatial effects and spatial processes to understand collective action and the patterning of contention. There is, however, little agreement about how to conceptualize the role of space within and across contentious episodes. In its broadest sense, space is deeply enmeshed in the full range of processes that constitute activism—sites where individual and collective identities, grievances, social connections, symbolic understandings and claims, repertoires, and challenges to power relations are constituted, structured, and enacted (Martin and Miller 2003). Space thus has more than geometric properties; it is imbued with symbols, meanings, and values that interact with material characteristics to constitute a rich context for social action.4 Understanding space

4 In some formulations, geometric dimensions constitute “space,” as opposed to “place,” with the latter implying more context-specific attention to material and cultural properties. See Gieryn (2000), Lefebvre (1991), and Miller and Martin (2000) for more detailed discussions of such distinctions. Here, we employ the term space to represent a context for the enactment of social relations, which requires attention both to abstract distance-based properties and to the extent to which the structure of these properties allow for the possibility of local and diffuse connections across social actors.
in this way requires attention to varied aspects of this context and is generally best suited to detailed case studies rather than models that seek to generalize across a number of cases.

On the other hand, identifying more generic spatial effects has been a central aim of diffusion-based models. Just as event-history diffusion models suggest that the probability of an event occurring at a particular time is influenced by the prior accumulation of similar events (Myers 2000; Strang and Tuma 1993), the logic behind spatial effect modeling is that events occurring in one place have some effect on the likelihood of similar events occurring in nearby locations (Deane, Beck, and Tolnay 1998). In some formulations, spatial patterns are the product of contextual effects, with characteristics of local environments influencing residents’ attitudes or behaviors, net of individual-level attributes. For instance, Baumer, Messner, and Rosenfeld (2003) found that independent of their personal characteristics, individuals residing in communities with higher homicide rates, racial heterogeneity, and “conservative political climates” were significantly more likely to support the death penalty.

But more explicit diffusion models posit that the occurrence of an event—more generally conceived of as the adoption of an “innovation”—exerts some influence over its reception in nearby areas. In most cases, such influences are positive, and the process follows that of a contagion model. Such findings have broad applicability, from the diffusion of fertility levels (Tolnay 1995) to church membership (Land, Deane, and Blau 1992) to social movement tactics (Andrews and Biggs 2002; Oberschall 1989; Soule 1997; Tilly 1993, 1995). Alternately, an adoption or event can have a negative influence on nearby units. Tolnay et al. (1996) found such an effect in their analysis of lynchings in the American South between 1895 and 1919, which they explained by demonstrating that the social control effect of nearby lynchings altered both whites’ and blacks’ behavior in a manner that deterred the emergence of further events.

Spatial effect formulations rely on two assumptions: (1) social relations provide a channel for interpersonal influence, which serves as a key mechanism for individuals’ adoption of innovations, behaviors, or attitudes; and (2) the likelihood of a connection between persons is inversely related to the geographic distance between them.† The first assumption rests upon

† Certain spatial diffusion models also emphasize the role of indirect ties, such as information that is transmitted through the mass media. While these noninterpersonal connections have satisfyingly explained the diffusion of tactics both within and across movements (McAdam and Rucht 1993; Myers 2000; Soule and Tarrow 1991), the case examined here is characterized by a heterodox organization’s intensive direct attempts to recruit from a large pool of attitudinally available individuals, and we thus focus on forms of “direct” connectedness here. Additionally, a true diffusion model traces the spread of an innovation over both space and time, though constraints posed by available data here require us to limit our analysis to the spatial dimension.
now-classic studies by Elihu Katz and his colleagues (Katz and Lazarsfeld 1955; Coleman, Katz, and Menzel 1966). The consistent finding in these studies—that individual attitudes and behaviors are shaped by the influence of those they interact with—connects more or less directly with what Strang and Meyer (1993) refer to as a relational approach to diffusion, which suggests that the level of interaction across “prior” and “potential” adopters is positively related to the rate of diffusion of an innovation. Such thinking has been applied more directly to collective action to explain the diffusion of participation within larger groupings, or what Oberschall (1994) refers to as a “multiplier effect.”

The second assumption more explicitly links space and connectedness, allowing analysts to employ spatial measures as an explicit or implicit proxy for social connectedness, with the presence of relations providing the means for social influence. The assumed positive relationship between physical proximity and the presence of social ties goes back more than 60 years to classic propinquity studies carried out by Stouffer (1940) and Festinger, Schachter, and Back (1959). In most previous spatial effect studies, the nature of the relationship between space and connectedness is assumed to be fairly constant, and straightforward measures of geographic distance remain the standard estimate of social connectedness across spatial units (Deane et al. 1998; Hedström 1994; Land et al. 1992; Myers 1997; Tolnay 1995; Tolnay et al. 1996).

While conceiving of space in such homogeneous terms is a parsimonious strategy, it seems clear that focusing on geographic distance misses key dimensions of variance across spatial units. Hedström (1994, pp. 1176–77) has noted that alternative measures of social proximity, preferably those that are sensitive to the sorts of dimensions emphasized in the social networks literature, would improve the precision of such analyses. Recent research employing heterogeneous diffusion models (Myers 2000; Strang and Tuma 1993) has moved in that direction through attempts to model the susceptibility of particular social units to the adoption of the behavior in question. Rather than rejecting the validity of distance-based spatial measures, these models conceive of susceptibility as a dimension to be modeled separately from geographically based proximity. For example, Myers (2000), in a study of the diffusion of late-1960s urban riots, argues that the likelihood that a specific city will imitate past riots was related both to its position in geographic and media-based networks (i.e., proximity) and to the size of its black population, which influenced the city’s susceptibility to influence. Cities with larger black populations had a disproportionate influence on surrounding areas but were consequently less responsive to events occurring outside of their own borders, muting the contagious effect of nearby riots.

Regardless of how spatial proximity is operationalized, a methodolog-
ical challenge is to explain whether observed spatial effects are due to some diffusion process, or, alternatively, whether they are an artifact of the geographic concentration of causal structural factors. If particular measures of inequality create a basis for the formation of grievances, observed spatial patterning in subsequent mobilizations around those grievances could be the result of a diffusion of contentious action (i.e., action in one location affected the likelihood that nearby locations also engaged in similar action), or instead a product of similar levels of inequality (and therefore similar bases for grievance formation) within adjacent areas.

Anselin (1988) and Land and Deane (1992) have devised a two-stage approach to adjudicate between such competing effects, which we employ here. Its general logic consists of regressing a set of independent variables on an observed outcome, calculating a “spatial effects” term by multiplying that model’s predicted values by a weights matrix (conventionally calculated using the inverse of geographic distances between spatial units, though cases for various alternate weightings can be made for particular substantive cases), and rerunning the initial model with the spatial effects term included as an additional independent variable. Similarly, it is possible that the interdependence of cases means that the spatial patterning of particular independent variables has an effect over and above their local values. To capture this effect, a “spatially lagged” version of each relevant independent variable—the spatially weighted sum of values across all sampled units—can be incorporated into the fully specified model as well. We discuss the specifics of such models in more detail below, but first we introduce the phenomenon of interest here: the rapid rise of the UKA in North Carolina during the Civil Rights era.

THE KLAN IN NORTH CAROLINA
On the heels of the Brown school desegregation decision and escalating Civil Rights activity, the challenge to Jim Crow–style segregation in the South gained a new immediacy in the mid-1950s. Not coincidentally, KKK activity during this period reached levels not seen since the 1920s, when the klan boasted over four million members. While overall klan membership in the 1950s and 1960s was measured in the tens of thousands rather than millions, previously splintered and ineffective organizations began to come together, bolstered by a renewed ability to recruit citizens across the South. The largest and most influential of these groups was the UKA, based in Tuscaloosa, Alabama, and headed by Robert Shelton, a former tire salesman. Shelton’s UKA had grown to include hundreds of active chapters (within the klan, they were referred to as “units” or
contexts for mobilization

“klaverns”) throughout the Deep South, bolstered in part by the considerable national publicity given to klan activity generally (including that generated by fatal acts perpetrated in Birmingham in 1963 and Selma two years later).6

As of 1963, the organization had failed to make any inroads in North Carolina (Chalmers 1981). Late that year, however, Shelton concluded a meeting with awning salesman J. Robert (Bob) Jones by giving him the mandate to “organize” the Tar Heel state for the UKA. Jones quickly became Shelton’s most aggressive recruiter (several years later, Jones’s skills would contribute to a public break between the two, amidst rumors that Shelton was worried that he was plotting to take over as Imperial Wizard), repeatedly crisscrossing the state to host nightly rallies and public cross burnings. By the end of 1965, tens of thousands of North Carolinians had attended these rallies (crowd estimates by the State Highway Patrol ranged between 150 and 3,000 at each rally, depending upon the location and time of year), with several thousand paying a $10 initiation fee—along with another $15 for robes—to join one of the over 100 klaverns organizing throughout the state (Williams 1964). Not surprisingly, this rapid upswing in klan activity increasingly drew the attention of the local media, which eagerly covered the klan’s rallies, periodic street walks (i.e., daytime marches by robed klansmen and helmeted members of the UKA “security guard”), and more controversial attempts to intimidate black residents or white liberals through cross burnings, beatings, and shotgun fire.

These latter activities led to considerable public condemnation of the North Carolina UKA by community leaders and state officials. Local ministerial associations and other civic groups formally denounced the klan as “basically un-American,” and in early 1965, governor Dan Moore established a state commission headed by former attorney general Malcolm Seawell to investigate the UKA (Clay 1965). This effort was paralleled at the federal level later that year, when the House Committee on Un-American Activities initiated a set of hearings on KKK activities. Early in the proceedings, the committee surprised most of the nation—including most North Carolinians, or at least those represented in the resulting local media coverage—by announcing that the state was “by far

6 The most newsworthy tragedy involving the klan during this period was the 1964 murder of Civil Rights workers Andrew Goodman, Michael Schwerner, and James Chaney in Neshoba County, Mississippi. These killings, however, involved a different klan organization, Samuel Bowers’s White Knights of the Ku Klux Klan. While the White Knights were perhaps the most violent klan faction of the era, their membership was confined to Mississippi and parts of Louisiana, while Shelton’s UKA spread across the South and even developed units in the Midwest, mid-Atlantic, and Northeast by the late 1960s.
the most active state for the UKA” (U.S. House of Representatives 1967). The hearings continued for a month; over 200 klan adherents eventually testified, and five UKA leaders—including Robert Shelton and Bob Jones—were sentenced to prison terms for their refusal to turn over records. By this time, the Federal Bureau of Investigation was also actively disrupting klan activities through their counterintelligence program (COINTELPRO) against “white hate groups” that, among other things, employed hundreds of informants to infiltrate most local klaverns (Cunningham 2004). By the end of the 1960s, such repressive efforts, combined with internal squabbles and quickly receding hopes for the resuscitation of the Jim Crow South, ensured that the klan retained little of its previous strength or appeal (Chalmers 1981).

But the fairly spectacular mid-decade rise of the UKA in North Carolina, a state that prided itself on its progressive brand of Southern politics, constitutes a puzzle generally overlooked within accounts of the Civil Rights–era klan, which have almost uniformly focused on KKK mobilization in Civil Rights “hot spots” such as Birmingham, Alabama; San Augustine, Florida; and Neshoba County, Mississippi (see Chalmers 1981; McWhorter 2001; Nelson 1993; Whitehead 1970). More generally, treating an individual state as a bounded, separable entity in terms of klan activity is also, we assert, appropriate and even analytically preferable. The UKA was really a confederation of state organizations—officially referred to as “realms”—led by their own cadres of state officers, each of whom managed a financial and organizational infrastructure almost exclusively focused on action within the state (though state leaders were responsible for sending a portion of their collected dues to Shelton’s national office in Alabama). As state leaders had distinct organizational styles and recruitment strategies, focusing on a single realm effectively allows us to hold these interorganizational dynamics constant to analyze the effect of macrolevel threats and community-level context on klan mobilization.

For our purposes, the klan’s overall growth and decline in North Carolina is secondary to the substantial variation in mobilization rates within the state. Figure 1 maps klan presence per resident of North Carolina counties as of late 1965. Strikingly apparent is the high concentration of klaverns in the mideastern region of the state, with very low levels of organization in the western mountain region. Moran’s I assesses the degree of global spatial autocorrelation across a set of units; that is, whether we observe a clustering in space of similar levels of klan mobilization. The Moran’s I value associated with the distribution in figure 1 indicates that the spatial pattern in the figure is nonrandom ($P<.001$), meaning that it is highly unlikely that the clustering evident in the map is due to chance. In the analysis below, we evaluate the extent to which this clustering can be explained by a contagion effect in which mobilization in a particular
Fig. 1.—Distribution of North Carolina UKA units. Darker shadings represent higher rates of klan presence per county resident.

county increased the likelihood of mobilization in nearby counties. We also unpack any evidence of contagion to examine the extent to which structurally induced grievances might have arisen due to the distribution of demographic, economic, and political factors in surrounding counties, and the extent to which differing opportunities for intercounty connections might have impacted levels of klan recruitment.

METHODS AND VARIABLES
General Approach
Our baseline assertion is that klan mobilization is a product of the demographic, economic, and political makeup of counties. Following recent studies of reactive movements, we assume that these structural dimensions provide potential bases for grievance formation around perceived threats to white residents’ status. However, we question previous research that conceptualizes the level of threat present within any particular spatial unit as purely a product of the structural makeup of that unit. We extend such models by incorporating three dimensions of spatial context.

First, to capture the influence of structural arrangements surrounding each individual county, we incorporate additional, spatially lagged versions of each independent variable in the baseline model. These lagged measures capture the distributions of each variable in all counties, weighted by the inverse distance between county centers. Substantively, this weighting scheme accounts for the fact that mobilization levels within counties may be influenced by factors outside of their own borders, but also that such intercounty influence plausibly decays with increasing distance from the county in question. The lagged variables allow us to assess the degree to which each county’s propensity for klan activity was shaped
by its location within the constellation of counties in the state as a whole (Anselin 2003).

Second, we examine the degree to which, net of the intracounty measures in our baseline model, klan presence was spatially contagious, meaning that mobilization in any particular county increased the likelihood that the klan would successfully mobilize in nearby counties. To do so, we incorporate a spatially lagged version of klan mobilization (our dependent variable) to assess whether geographic proximity explains the patterning of reactive activity across units (in this case, counties), over and above the effect of counties’ structural makeup captured in the baseline model.

Finally, we recognize that klan mobilization entailed the active recruitment and sustained organization of members, which required some mechanism to link aggrieved, attitudinally available individuals to the UKA. This focus on collective action differs from many of the studies derived from Blalock’s “power-threat hypothesis” (Blalock 1967; Fossett and Kiecolt 1989; Huckfeldt and Kohfeld 1989; Oliver and Mendelberg 2000; Taylor 1998), which have looked at racial attitudes or discrete discriminatory occurrences rather than outcomes requiring the coalescence of individual attitudes into sustained commitment and organization. Specifically, we note that counties differed in their degree of connectedness to neighboring areas and hypothesize that higher levels of intercounty access translated into increased opportunity for collective action. In general terms, we suggest that within an area containing a wide range of attitudinally available individuals (e.g., those sharing a threat-based grievance), connections across individuals should facilitate the recruitment of adherents to existing movement organizations.

Note that our analysis here does not account for klan activity occurring outside the North Carolina state border. While the UKA was active in surrounding states, and other studies have accounted for so-called border effects (e.g., McVeigh et al. 2004), we have chosen on substantive grounds to confine our analysis to UKA mobilization within the state. As noted above, the UKA had an extensive leadership structure within each state, and there was relatively little attempt to coordinate recruitment efforts across states. Further, klan activity in neighboring counties to the west and south (i.e., in Tennessee, Georgia, and South Carolina border counties) was negligible, and the significant klan presence in southern Virginia only emerged in the later 1960s, when particular North Carolina–based UKA officials expanded their organization efforts across state lines (this was a notable exception to the UKA’s predominant state-centered dynamic, and it stemmed from the failure of past UKA Virginia leadership to make significant inroads in that state). Thus, there is no reason to expect that the spatial diffusion of klan activity between 1964 and 1966 was impacted significantly by cross-border recruitment efforts.
Modeling Technique

Count data is typically badly suited to straightforward ordinary least-squares regression models, as count variables are discrete (rather than continuous), truncated at the lower end (i.e., at zero), and tend to exhibit considerable skewness (Beck and Tolnay 1995; Long 1997). Rate data often exhibits similar characteristics and is best dealt with through Poisson regression models (Garner, Mulvey, and Shaw 1995). Poisson processes, however, assume that the mean of the dependent variable equals its variance. In many cases, including the measure of UKA klaverns per county resident used here, the variable is in fact “overdispersed,” meaning that its variance exceeds its mean. One solution to this problem is the negative binomial model, which incorporates a stochastic component, referred to as a “dispersion parameter,” into the model (Long 1997). For this model, the expected value of $y$ given $x$ is:

$$\tilde{\mu}_i = \exp (x_i \beta + \epsilon_i),$$

where $\epsilon_i$ is a random error assumed to be uncorrelated with $x$, accounting for unobserved heterogeneity among $i$.

Our analysis employs negative binomial regression models to explain the spatial patterning of klan mobilization. The first equation (model 1) estimates the impact of local demographic, economic, and political factors on the count of klaverns per resident of North Carolina counties. Model 2 adds spatially lagged versions of the independent variables included in model 1. As discussed above, these lagged terms capture the spatially weighted sum of each variable in all North Carolina counties, allowing us to assess the degree to which particular forms of structurally induced grievances were not purely products of local (intracounty) dynamics. More generally, the model captures the degree to which characteristics of adjoining counties were salient structural determinants of the klan’s local appeal. The spatially lagged value of variable $x_k$ for county $i$ ($L_{ki}$) is calculated as:

$$L_{ki} = x_k \cdot D_{ij}.$$  

The formal equation for this model then becomes:

$$\tilde{\mu}_i = \exp (x_i \beta + L_i \tilde{\beta}_L + \gamma_i),$$

where $\tilde{\beta}_L$ represents the effect of parameters capturing the impact of the lagged variables $L$ on klan mobilization and $\gamma_i$ the error term.

Model 3 examines how the mobilization context (i.e., the patterning of klaverns in other counties) affects the likelihood of klan mobilization in any particular county, a so-called spatial effect. As discussed above, the spatial patterning of klan mobilization provides at least preliminary evi-
idence of a diffusion process, signaling the importance of communication channels through which UKA members could recruit like-minded individuals to the organization. This model follows the two-stage procedure developed by Anselin (1988) and Land and Deane (1992) (see also Deane et al. 1998; Tolnay et al. 1996). This procedure builds on equation (1) above, using the estimates derived in model 1 to obtain a set of predicted values ($M^*$) for the number of klaverns expected to be present in each county, based on that county’s demographic, economic, and political makeup. To capture the net effect of spatial proximity, while retaining a sensitivity to the erosion in likelihood of county-to-county recruitment as the distance between county pairs increases, we multiply $M^*$ by $D_{ij}$, the distance between county pair $ij$, yielding a measure of the potential exposure for county $i$ to events in $j$ (Tolnay et al. 1996; Land and Deane [1992] refer to this exposure term as the “generalized population-potential variable”). The mobilization exposure term $E_i$ is expressed by the equation:

$$E_i = M^* D_{ij},$$

where $M^*$, $D_{ij}$ represents the total mobilization exposure for county $i$. The spatial exposure term is then reintroduced as an additional variable added to equation (1), representing the effect of spatial context, net of the demographic, economic, and political factors included in model 1. More formally, the second-stage equation is:

$$\tilde{\mu}_i = \exp (x_i \beta + \beta_E E_i + \nu_i),$$

where $\beta_E$ is the effect parameter capturing the impact of mobilization exposure, and $\nu_i$ is the second-stage error term.

This spatial-effects model can provide evidence of a diffusion or contagion effect, implicitly assuming that geographical proximity serves as a reasonable proxy for social connectedness. In model 4, we directly examine whether klan mobilization was significantly shaped by the opportunities existing within each county for aggrieved individuals to link to the UKA, focusing on the extent to which the structure of connections across counties shaped klan outcomes.

Following Deane et al. (1998), we used the inverse of the distance between counties when computing the recruitment exposure variable. While other studies have argued that their substantive case justified more complex nonlinear erosion estimates (commonly the inverse of the squared or cubed distance—see Tolnay et al. [1996]), all have estimated spatial effects as a simple function of geographic distance. In models not presented here, we recomputed the exposure variable (as well as the lagged independent variables in equation [3] above) using the inverse of both the squared and square-rooted distance, with little substantive change in the results discussed below.
Dependent Variable

The dependent variable in each of our models is the rate of klan activity within each North Carolina county, captured by the number of existing klaverns per county resident. We obtained this data from a census of klan units compiled as part of the House Committee on Un-American Activities (HUAC) hearings on the KKK (U.S. House of Representatives 1967, pp. 145–63). The committee was able to gather this information from “field investigations” (FBI code for informant reports) as well as bank records subpoenaed as part of the congressional investigation. While the committee’s report acknowledges the difficulty of pinpointing klan activity, with klaverns frequently appearing, disappearing, or shifting allegiances to different regional or national organizations, they estimate their error rate at “less than ten percent” (U.S. House of Representatives 1967, p. 19). The klan was a secretive organization, and many klaverns existed under the guise of hunting or social clubs, making it difficult for outside observers to identify their existence as KKK units. As the FBI had a dense informant network in place by 1965 (Cunningham 2004), the HUAC report appears to be by far the most accurate source of unit locations. The FBI coordinated its North Carolina informants through its field office in Charlotte and a set of local resident agencies placed throughout the state, making it unlikely that klaverns missed by agents would be disproportionately associated with any particular county or region.

To understand klan mobilization during this period, we have chosen to focus on the presence of klaverns rather than on UKA-initiated events for two reasons. First, in a spatial sense, violent or terrorist klan actions in particular communities were only loosely related to the level of mobilization in those communities; klan policy frequently called for adherents from neighboring counties to carry out such acts in order to reduce the likelihood that they would be identified by local witnesses. Second, we are interested in the role of community context in contentious political mobilizations and thus want to focus on sustained engagement in specific klan organizations rather than potentially more ephemeral participation in a particular short-lived event. While not every klavern member was highly committed to the group, the presence of a stable klavern in a

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9 The HUAC report also included counts of “Ladies Auxiliaries” to particular klaverns, which were generally made up of the wives of klavern members. We have chosen to eliminate these auxiliary groups from our count; while the women’s groups clearly made significant contributions to klavern activities (akin to Blee’s [1991] account of similar women’s groups in the 1920s klan), their close ties to particular klaverns meant that they did not constitute autonomous and analytically separable units. Additionally, since these Ladies Auxiliaries were generally found in counties having larger numbers of men’s klaverns, their inclusion would introduce an undesirable nonlinearity into the dependent variable.
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community meant that a substantial number of klansmen were attending weekly meetings, paying monthly dues, and regularly pledging their allegiance to the UKA itself while also participating in the planning of the large number of rallies put on by the klan each year. At the start of 1966, the mean membership size of North Carolina klaverns was 64, ranging from a presumptive UKA-mandated minimum of 25 to a small number of units with over 200 adherents (FBI 1968). While this fairly significant variance in klavern size points to the number of members per county as the ideal dependent variable, such detailed data unfortunately are not available.

Independent Variables

In the first stage of our analysis, we test the extent to which structural conditions associated with the emergence of threat-based grievances predict the level of klan activity in North Carolina counties. Specifically, we follow earlier formulations of competition-based models, which have demonstrated that reactive protest activity can be triggered by instabilities in demographic, economic, or political conditions (Koopmans 1996; Meyer 1990; Olzak 1992; Van Dyke and Soule 2002). In the case of racial violence, rising unemployment rates, an influx of minority residents, or the increasing visibility of affirmative action-type policies have been tied to subsequent mobilization by racist or white separatist groups, indicating a more general relationship between perceived competition across groups and ethnic and racial conflict (Beck 2000; Dobratz and Shanks-Meile 1997; Koopmans 1996; Olzak 1992; Tolnay and Beck 1995).

Our study applies this perspective to examine the extent to which demographic, economic, and political threats posed by nonwhite populations explain the patterning of klan activity across North Carolina counties. For each of the variables in this model, we obtained data on county characteristics from the U.S. Bureau of the Census’s (1960) Census of Population. Though our dependent variable measures klaverns in ex-

10 The 1960 census includes economic and demographic characteristics only for “whites” and “nonwhites” in each county. However, in almost all counties during this period, the number of black vs. nonwhite residents is essentially identical. There was a substantial number of Native Americans in a handful of counties, though there is strong evidence that the local klan looked down on both groups equivalently when advancing its white supremacist agenda (one example of this was a 1958 rally in Robeson County by a group called U.S. Klans, which ended in a rout of klan attendees by a group of armed Lumbee Indians; the rally had been designed partly to send a message to the local Lumbee population—see Craven [1966]).

11 With the exception of data related to the NAACP, obtained from Meier and Bracey (1987), and historical lynching data from Tolnay and Beck (1995).
Contexts for Mobilization

istence in late 1965, the baseline conditions for the emergence of klan activity were in place in 1960. An alternative would have been to interpolate a 1965 value for each of our independent variables from both the 1960 and 1970 censuses, though this strategy is problematic because many of the pronounced demographic shifts that had occurred in the state by 1970 were in fact produced by the Civil Rights/klan dynamic that we seek to explain here.

We capture the demographic threat dimension through the percentage of nonwhite residents in each county. The presence of nonwhites in itself may constitute a threat in the form of a substantial change in daily life within desegregated institutions, and therefore we expect the percentage of nonwhite residents to be positively related to klan mobilization. Following Blalock (1967) and Tolnay and Beck’s (1995) finding that the proportion of black residents can have a substantial nonlinear effect, we also include a quadratic term. Blalock (1967) argues that we should expect that white residents’ perceived sense of threat should decrease at the highest levels of minority presence when this threat is primarily based in economic competition, but increase at such extremes when the threat is rooted in a feared loss of political power. Here, we advance a rather more generic hypothesis, positing that klan mobilization may decrease where nonwhites constitute a very high relative percentage of the local population, as the threat posed by their presence is counterbalanced by the increased costs of mobilization as whites’ relative representation shrinks.

Nondemographic proxies of economic and political threats have been linked to subsequent reactive majority-group mobilizations as well (Olzak 1990; Tolnay and Beck 1995). Competition and threat-based models generally emphasize changes in the size or economic and political standing of nonwhite populations, rather than their absolute levels (Beck 2000; Olzak 1992; Van Dyke and Soule 2002). As we are dealing with a context in which the political climate itself was changing with federally imposed desegregation mandates, the presence of a particular number of black residents within a community or of black workers within a labor market sector carried a different meaning when those residents/workers were theoretically able to share previously white-only schools, restaurants, and jobs. Thus, we argue that perceived threats emerged even when structural factors remain constant.12

We capture the economic threat dimension through two measures. The first is median white family income, representing the economic vulnerability of the local white population. We expect this latter factor to be negatively related to the number of local klaverns, as economic depri-

12 Incorporating variables capturing change over time did not add to the overall significance of our models (results not shown, but available from the authors).
vation might exacerbate a perceived threat posed by nonwhite workers (Olzak et al. 1994). While work in the resource mobilization tradition suggests that the availability of material resources would have a positive impact on mobilization (Edwards and McCarthy 2004), we hypothesize that reactive protest is shaped more strongly by grievances that result from the presence of economic deprivation.

Our second measure of economic threat is the ratio of nonwhite to white workers within the manufacturing sector. We focus specifically on manufacturing workers rather than the overall proportion of nonwhite employees, as this latter measure is highly correlated with the racial makeup of residents, our demographic threat variable. Perhaps more important, economic competition remains low so long as white and black workers operate within a stable segmented labor market. It is only when both groups compete for the same types of jobs that we expect racial conflict to increase. The manufacturing sector represents a particular labor market niche, one in which employees often necessarily work within close proximity to each other. Thus, manufacturing work had traditionally been marked by strict racial separation, and this variable proxies the degree to which white workers perceive that desegregation efforts will threaten their standing in the labor market. We consequently expect it to be positively related to klan mobilization.

We account for the level of political threat faced by whites by capturing the extent of Civil Rights mobilization within each county. In North Carolina, by far the most active statewide Civil Rights organization was the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), which had 81 local chapters across the state as of 1955 (Gavins 1991). This number more than doubled over the next decade, with 102 additional chapters chartered by the end of 1964. We include a measure of the number of NAACP chapters in place in each county by 1960, which provides a broad sense of local Civil Rights mobilization. Additionally, we include a variable capturing the number of NAACP chapters established between 1960 and 1964, as it is possible that perceived political threats come not from entrenched Civil Rights organization, but instead from a sense that such action is increasing locally.

Additionally, it is possible that a cultural legacy of racial oppression and violence played a role in the klan’s appeal during the 1960s. Certainly in the state’s mideastern region—by far the most active for the UKA—slave labor was prevalent on antebellum tobacco growing and other types of farms. Capturing this effect directly is difficult, as the distribution of slaves counted in the 1860 census is highly correlated with the presence of nonwhite residents 100 years later. It is likely that an observed positive relationship between nonwhite residents and klan mobilization is more strongly a product of the contemporary threat posed by nonwhite presence.
under desegregation than of the legacy of race relations under slavery. To capture the related impact of historical propensity for racial violence, we instead include a dummy variable indicating whether or not any lynchings occurred in each county between 1882 and 1930.13

Descriptive background for each independent variable is included in table 1. In table 2, model 2 includes spatially lagged versions of these independent variables, which provide insight into the extent to which characteristics of surrounding counties shape the level of perceived threat within any given county. Model 3 incorporates the “mobilization exposure” term discussed above to capture the extent to which Klan activity exhibited a spatial contagion effect. Model 4 unpacks this exposure term by assessing whether Klan mobilization was additionally a product of differential opportunities to connect aggrieved individuals and link them to the UKA itself.

In this final model, we conceptualize “mobilization opportunity” as a product of the extent and structure of social relations across counties. A guiding hypothesis is that intercounty connectedness is positively related to mobilization, as relations serve as potential recruitment channels across groupings of attitudinally available individuals. To capture “connectedness” in the absence of data directly measuring connections across residents, we emphasize recognizable means through which relations are likely to exist and diffuse. Perhaps the most robust indicator of communication across counties is the structure of roads connecting the areas in question. The evolution of state routes and highways in North Carolina was quite functional, with heavily traveled routes being officially designated for maintenance by the state (Turner 2003). We proxy county centrality, or the extent to which counties were tied to diffuse communication networks, by a spatially lagged count of the number of state roads within each county. Through the spatially weighted sum of roads present in all surrounding counties, this centrality measure assesses the degree to which any given county is tied to the statewide highway network.

ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Tables 2 and 3 present the results of four negative binomial regression models. In each, model 1 tests the competition or threat-based hypotheses discussed above, while model 2 adds spatially lagged versions of each

13 In models not presented here, but available from the authors, we included other control variables, including residents’ median age and years of education, as well as population stability. None of these factors were individually significant in multivariate analyses, nor did their inclusion significantly alter the behavior of the variables included in table 2.
TABLE 1  
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Min</th>
<th>Max</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No. of klaverns per 10,000 white county residents</td>
<td>.656</td>
<td>.943</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% nonwhite residents</td>
<td>26.41</td>
<td>18.26</td>
<td>.27</td>
<td>64.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median white family income (dollars)</td>
<td>5,691</td>
<td>1,146</td>
<td>3,330</td>
<td>8,938</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ratio of nonwhite/white manufacturing workers</td>
<td>.18</td>
<td>.16</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cumulative no. of lynching events, 1882–1930</td>
<td>.97</td>
<td>1.34</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of NAACP chapters (1960)</td>
<td>.79</td>
<td>.78</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of NAACP chapters established, 1960–64</td>
<td>.83</td>
<td>.91</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

threat variable to the baseline model. Model 3 evaluates the role of spatial contagion in the patterning of klan mobilization. Finally, model 4 examines the impact of county connectedness, while controlling for the grievance-based factors introduced in the initial model. Table 2 reports the negative binomial regression coefficients and standard errors, while table 3 includes standardized exponentiated coefficient terms, which represent the impact of a standard deviation change in each independent variable on the number of klaverns per county resident.14

Model 1 demonstrates that the threat variables generally have significant effects consistent with our hypotheses. The percentage of nonwhite residents, a measure of demographic threat, behaves as expected, exerting a curvilinear effect on klan mobilization. Both the demographic threat coefficient and its quadratic term have a highly significant impact on klavern presence (P<.001, two-tailed test), though the magnitude of the effect varies across the distribution of demographic values. The effect of an increase in the percentage of nonwhite residents was greatest in contexts where few nonwhites reside, with the marginal increase declining when the percentage of nonwhites is higher. Where nonwhites make up greater than 35% of the population, the effect reverses; that is, marginal increases in the percentage of nonwhite residents decrease the likelihood of klan activity. Figure 2 shows how a change in the percentage of non-

14 More precisely, the values in table 3 represent standardized factor changes. The effects reflect that, for a standard deviation change in independent variable $x_k$, the expected klavern count changes by a factor of $\exp(\beta_k \times s_k)$, when all other variables are held constant (Long 1997). The percentage change values discussed below are then computed as: $100 \times (\exp(\beta_k \times s_k) - 1)$. 

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white residents impacts klan presence across the full distribution of values. The pronounced curvilinear effect is likely a product of the increased costs of segregationist mobilization in the presence of large nonwhite populations.

As expected, the proportion of nonwhite manufacturing workers, an economic competition measure, had a strong positive effect ($P < .01$, two-tailed test) on the dependent variable. A standard deviation increase in this measure—represented, for instance, by a county where the percentage of nonwhite manufacturing workers moved from 18% (the mean value for the state) to 34%—was associated with a 77% increase in klan activity. A second proxy for economic threat—the economic vulnerability of the white population, captured by the median white income variable—only emerges as significant in subsequent models. The measure consistently behaves as expected, however, with higher median income levels exhibiting a prophylactic effect on klan presence.

The political threat measures, tied to local NAACP activity, uncovered an interesting finding: while an entrenched Civil Rights presence appears to have had no significant effect, counties where new NAACP chapters were established after 1960 were considerably more likely to be the sites of subsequent klan mobilization ($P < .01$, two-tailed test). This lends insight into the manner in which Civil Rights mobilization was perceived as a threat during this period. While long-active NAACP chapters were likely viewed as compatible with the status quo (i.e., as historically working toward gains for black residents that did not present a viable threat to Jim Crow), the rise of new organizations—frequently in previously inactive counties—was perceived as a driving force in the looming changes made possible by an expanded political opportunity structure. A standard deviation increase in new NAACP chapters, which in this case would represent less than a single additional newly formed chapter (SD = .91), increased klan activity by 35%, holding other variables in the model constant. Finally, counties with a historical legacy of racial violence were also more likely to have an active klan presence in the Civil Rights era ($P < .01$, two-tailed test), with counties that had been the sites of lynchings exhibiting 78% more klan activity, controlling for the other variables in the model.

The other models in tables 2 and 3 retain each of the variables from this baseline model (excepting the nonsignificant existing NAACP chapter measure), allowing us to weigh the impacts of lagged threat, contagion, and connectedness factors on klan mobilization. Model 2 adds spatially lagged versions of the independent variables shown to have a significant effect on klan presence in the initial model. The results demonstrate that this particular form of spatial context—the location of each individual case vis à vis all other counties in the state—matters, though its impact
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE 2</th>
<th>NEGATIVE BINOMIAL REGRESSION ESTIMATES OF THE NUMBER OF UKA KLaverns per Resident of North Carolina Counties</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Model 1: Threat Model</td>
<td>Model 2: Spatially Lagged Threat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%nonwhite residents</td>
<td>.026***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(0.0293)</td>
<td>(0.0320)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%nonwhite residents²</td>
<td>−0.014***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(0.0004)</td>
<td>(0.0004)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median white family income</td>
<td>−0.0002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(0.0002)</td>
<td>(0.0001)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ratio of nonwhite/white manufacturing workers</td>
<td>3.4977***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1.1358)</td>
<td>(1.3605)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recorded lynching event, 1882–1930</td>
<td>.5764***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(0.2227)</td>
<td>(0.2150)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall no. of NAACP chapters in county</td>
<td>−0.0834</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(0.1633)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of new NAACP chapters established, 1960–64</td>
<td>.3260***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(0.1172)</td>
<td>(0.1139)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variable</td>
<td>Estimate (SE)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lagged nonwhite residents</td>
<td>-.0031 (.0016)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lagged lynching events</td>
<td>.1122** (.0361)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lagged manufacturing workers</td>
<td>.3717* (.1617)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobilization exposure</td>
<td>.0032** (.0012)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>County centrality</td>
<td>.0025* (.0011)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Intercept                        | -.3989 (.6509)  
| (Dispersion parameter)           | -.2704 (.2358)  
|                                  | -.4658 (.2449)  
|                                  | -.3982 (.2457)  
|                                  | -.2815 (.2305)  
| $\chi^2$                         | 71.24 86.83  
| df                               | 93 91 93  

**Note.** $N = 100$; SEs in parentheses.

* $P < .05$  
** $P < .01$  
*** $P < .001$.  

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**Note.** $N = 100$; SEs in parentheses.
### TABLE 3

**Standardized Exponentiated Coefficient Values for Negative Binomial Regression on the Number of UKA Klaverns per Resident of North Carolina Counties**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Model 1: Threat Model</th>
<th>Model 2: Spatially Laggd Threat</th>
<th>Model 3: Threat and Contagion</th>
<th>Model 4: Threat and Connectedness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>% nonwhite residents</td>
<td>6.5062</td>
<td>3.5548</td>
<td>2.7607</td>
<td>4.1729</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% nonwhite residents²</td>
<td>.2252</td>
<td>.3212</td>
<td>.3597</td>
<td>.2676</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median white family income</td>
<td>.8223</td>
<td>.7668</td>
<td>.8030</td>
<td>.7622</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ratio of nonwhite/white manuf. workers</td>
<td>1.7702</td>
<td>1.9970</td>
<td>1.7519</td>
<td>2.3955</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recorded lynching event, 1882–1930</td>
<td>1.3359</td>
<td>1.2560</td>
<td>1.2678</td>
<td>1.2925</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall no. of NAACP chapters in county</td>
<td>.9569</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of new NAACP chapters established, 1960–65</td>
<td>1.3456</td>
<td>1.2555</td>
<td>1.2214</td>
<td>1.2710</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lagged nonwhite residents</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lagged lynching events</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lagged manufacturing workers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobilization exposure</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1.6852</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>County centrality</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1.4421</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Contexts for Mobilization

Fig. 2.—Impact of demographic threat on klan presence. All other independent variables included in model 1 of tables 2 and 3 set at their mean values.

...varies based on the type of threat considered. Newly organized Civil Rights activity, for instance, constituted a significant political threat to the status quo, spurring countermovement activity in the form of klan mobilization. However, it appears that its impact was highly local. While the formation of new NAACP chapters was significantly related to subsequent klan presence within each county in question, newly established NAACP groups in neighboring counties or regions of the state had no significant impact on KKK activity.

In contrast, a legacy of racial violence, proxied in this case by past lynching events, appears to have an impact that stretched beyond county borders. Controlling for local lynching events, the patterning of such occurrences in nearby counties had an independent positive and highly significant effect on klan mobilization ($P < .01$), with a standard deviation increase in the variable associated with a 109% increase in klan activity. As the events in question occurred 30 or more years prior to the rise of the Civil Rights–era KKK, the effect is due less to the lynching events themselves than to the underlying cultural conditions that gave rise to them in a previous era. Still, this finding is consistent with past work that shows that racial violence had regulative power that held over both space and time, as word spread through surrounding communities through personal connections and media accounts, and ritualistic violence became

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etched into individual memories (Ayers 1984; Stovel 2001; Tolnay et al. 1996).

Economic competition, as represented by the percentage of nonwhite manufacturing workers, likewise had considerable supralocal effect, as a significant nonwhite workforce in surrounding counties had a positive effect on our dependent variable \( P < .05 \), over and above that of the racial structure of the local workforce. This finding contrasts with the spatially lagged measure of demographic threat, that is, the percentage of nonwhite residents in surrounding counties. While the effect of this latter variable was significant, an increase in surrounding nonwhite population was associated with a decrease in klan activity, controlling for the makeup of the local environment. This difference is telling. The threat posed by the presence of nonwhite manufacturing workers was not confined by county boundaries, as the promise of upwardly mobile employment provided a powerful incentive for workers to seek opportunities outside of their local communities. However, white residents’ estimation of how desegregation measures would impact them socially—tangibly expressed by the potential for cross-race mixing in public spaces such as restaurants, movie theaters, and schools—had much to do with the relative representation of nonwhites within local communities themselves. In this sense, resistance to the institutional and civic impacts of desegregation seem to have been governed by a sort of NIMBY effect, with the presence of African-American residents in neighboring counties contributing little to whites’ demographic threat calculus.

While model 2 examined the extent to which various classes of competition/threat were not defined purely by factors endogenous to each county, model 3 focuses on a different dimension of spatial context, employing a two-stage procedure to incorporate a spatial effect term measuring the extent to which significant spatial patterning exists net of the makeup of each county. As we see in table 2, the mobilization exposure or “spatial effect” coefficient is positive and significant \( P < .01 \), two-tailed test), indicating a contagion dynamic. In other words, independent of significant demographic, economic, and political determinants, klan activity in nearby counties increased the likelihood of mobilization in a particular county. We discuss the implications of the relative magnitude of this effect below.

Model 4 seeks to unpack the substantive significance of this geographically defined contagion effect. While the mobilization exposure term in model 3 is derived from a spatial effect term based on the geographic distance between county pairs, the diffusion of mobilization cannot be understood as a direct product of this distance, but instead as a proxy for connections within and across counties that represent potential recruitment channels. Model 4 more directly captures the opportunities for
such connections by including a measure of the spatially weighted sum of state roads surrounding each county. As hypothesized, this variable is positively related to klan mobilization ($P<.05$, two-tailed test).

The magnitude of the spatial effects included in models 3 and 4 is substantial. A standard deviation increase in the mobilization exposure term in model 3 is associated with a 69% rise in klan activity; we would expect klan activity to be 44% higher with a similar standard deviation increase in model 4’s county centrality measure. In both cases, the size of the spatial effect is in line with the localized threat values included in the model. Additionally, the inclusion of these contextual measures, while not reducing the competition/threat variables to insignificance, does reduce the explanatory power of certain factors—most pronouncedly that of demographic threat.

DISCUSSION

Our central aim has been to focus analytic attention on the role of spatial context in the patterning of reactive social movement mobilization. Using the case of the UKA in North Carolina counties during the mid-1960s, the results presented in table 2 indicate that klan mobilization was significantly a product of structural contexts that gave rise to politicized grievances. However, as an extension of conventional ethnic competition models, we have also demonstrated that the emergence of particular forms of “threat” were not exclusively a product of local environments. Instead, we take seriously the fact that local contexts are not entirely separable from their positions within the constellation of counties across the state and show that the makeup of these surrounding counties was salient for individual-level grievance formation.

We assert that these findings have broad applicability, certainly to cases of reactive movement activity where the mobilization of grievances translates into sustained organized contention. In a related way, the perspective offered here also links to, and extends, existing research on social movement organizations generally. The above analysis demonstrates the importance of emphasizing the contexts within which mobilization occurs, that is, the myriad connections existing within and across communities that provide opportunities for attitudinally available individuals to link to organizations such as the UKA.

A long line of findings in the social movements literature has demonstrated the importance of such relational resources—generally conceptualized as organizational and informal networks—in the mobilization process (Edwards and McCarthy 2004; McAdam 1986, 1999; Morris 1984; Oberschall 1973). Such insights, however, tend to focus on specific insti-
Institutional and interpersonal ties to movement organizations rather than broader community-level contexts for contentious activity (though Gould [1991] and Ohlemacher [1996] are significant exceptions). While the competition-based dynamic that governs mobilization into reactive movements like the klan does not necessarily apply to nonreactive contentious episodes, the broader insight—that certain settings facilitate the mobilization of noninstitutional political action more than others—can provide one vehicle for fully conceptualizing the frequently uneven patterning of social movement activity generally.

The analysis here only gestures toward a fully specified modeling of these mobilization contexts. Model 3 above demonstrates that klan mobilization did follow a contagion pattern, with the presence of a UKA klavern in one area increasing the likelihood of other klaverns existing nearby. This finding demonstrates the need for more attention devoted to the processes through which extant grievances translate into sustained organized activity. While the UKA’s rallies and cross burnings often successfully exploited local grievances to attract large crowds, our conception of klan mobilization involved considerable organization. Far from spontaneous eruptions, klavern members elected a large slate of officers, collected dues, held weekly meetings, carried out complex secretive rituals, and organized a range of legal and illegal activities. Structural position may define a population of residents that was attitudinally available to klan recruitment appeals and even predict the extent to which the klan could generate a large supportive crowd for a particular rally or event, but explanatory models should also be concerned with the mechanisms through which sustained commitment to local klaverns emerged and spread.

Our discussion of the contagion effect in model 3 of tables 2 and 3 above provides a foundation for this sort of analysis. Generally, the interpretation of observed contagion (captured by the mobilization exposure term in model 3) rests on propinquity effects: the geographic proximity of social units tells us something about the likelihood that these units were linked in some socially significant way. The explanation for the spatial diffusion of a social behavior can thereby center on how near and far particular observations are to each other, so long as these distances are understood as stochastic proxies for the degree of connectedness between those observations. Here, we confront this assumption more directly, by representing the social distance between counties as a spatially lagged sum of state roads in all surrounding North Carolina counties. This variable proxies the extent to which individuals in any given county had opportunity to link to residents elsewhere.

While this measure of county centrality provides a viable mechanism linking aggrieved individuals to existing social movement organizations,
we recognize that it is of course an inelegant proxy of community connectivity. Ideally, a conceptually richer examination of such factors would pay more nuanced attention to particular community-level contexts for mobilization. Such a task would require recognizing various types of institutional settings for politicized relations, as well as the social and cultural significance of specific business establishments, religious organizations, civic associations, and the like. Churches, for instance, could provide a venue for a vehement defense of segregation (e.g., each klan rally began with a Christian appeal by a local preacher) or alternatively serve as a legitimate moral voice urging nonviolence and racial justice (Chappell 2003; Payne 1995). Similarly, business owners’ associations that served as the backbone of the Citizens’ Councils in much of the South (McMillen 1994) were also a central constituency behind the North Carolina “Good Neighbor Councils” that worked toward the peaceful desegregation of local institutions.

Given this heterogeneity within these general classes of institutions, we feel that detailed study of a small number of cases is ultimately the best approach to extending our findings here to untangle the effects of particular local institutions. Martin and Miller (2003) make a similar point, arguing that the conceptualization of “space” as a generic variable lacks sensitivity to the varied ways in which contention emerges out of, and within, particular spatial settings. As an alternative, they call for a case study approach that allows researchers to contextualize space within their analyses. Pursuing this strategy would provide a means to disentangle the complex set of relational functions served by particular institutional venues, rather than seeking to generalize across broad, and inevitably heterogeneous, classes of associations.

Finally, the behavior of the NAACP variables in the above models sheds substantive insight into the interplay of Civil Rights activity and resulting segregationist countermobilization. Andrews (2002) provides compelling evidence that klan and other antidesegregation efforts emerged in reaction to social movement mobilization as well as to the demographic and economic makeup of surrounding communities. We find support for this idea as well, and extend it by demonstrating that the perceived threat to status quo race relations posed by the Civil Rights Movement stemmed from the expansion of groups like the NAACP within localized settings. In contrast, a long-established NAACP presence had no significant impact on klan mobilization, nor did increased Civil Rights activity in neighboring counties. Such findings, in conjunction with the significant sociospatial effects shown in models 2–4 above, give more nuanced attention to how threats to the status quo were constructed by white North Carolinians, as well as to the specific contexts that served as ideal settings for reactive mobilization by groups like the UKA.
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