

The Geographies of Local Immigration Policies in the United States

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## Abstract

Over the past decade, hundreds of local governments have considered or implemented locally-scaled immigration policies. Some localities have enacted *inclusionary* policies that seek to promote an inclusive environment for all immigrants regardless of legal status, whereas others have opted for *exclusionary* policies designed to drive away undocumented immigrants. A burgeoning interdisciplinary literature has provided substantial evidence of how both transformations in US federal immigration policy and locality-specific conditions have led to the emergence of these local immigration policies. This literature has paid less attention to how these policies vary geographically, and the role of social and political spaces in enabling or constraining these policy responses. In this dissertation, I employ a multi-methods approach to conduct a geographical analysis of the factors and conditions that influence local governments to implement local policy responses to immigration. The first part of the dissertation is based on a national quantitative study I designed to test a series of hypotheses about the introduction and intent of these policies. I find that local immigration policies are associated with the size and pace of change of the local immigrant population, and that exclusionary policies tend to be found in suburbs, the US South, and areas of lower education, higher Republican voting, and higher owner-occupied housing. The remainder of the dissertation draws from a multi-sited qualitative study of six suburbs in the Chicago, Washington DC, and Phoenix metropolitan areas. Based on this research, I find that local immigration policies are influenced by multi-scalar immigration policy hierarchies, networks of national and regional immigration activists, and deeply-rooted place identities. Further, proponents of exclusionary immigration policies in the suburbs frame their policy positions as a defense of a suburban ideal reflected in the “American Dream.” Such policies, however, also reflect anxieties about fiscal insecurity and loss of local identity in the wake of continued suburban population growth.

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## **CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION**

### **Cave Creek, Arizona**

In the mid-2000s, a small town in Maricopa County, Arizona named Cave Creek was in the midst of a transformation from sleepy Western mining town to rapidly-growing commuter suburb of Phoenix. For much of its existence, Cave Creek represented what locals termed the “cowboy ethic;” a distinctive libertarianism that attracted an eclectic mix of residents from ranchers to artists drawn to the area’s natural beauty. As Sunbelt metropolitan areas such as Phoenix boomed in population from the 1990s to the mid-2000s, rapid suburbanization enveloped towns like Cave Creek and brought substantial demographic changes. Cave Creek and the rest of northern Maricopa County, in particular, attracted an affluent professional class who settled in large part in the newly constructed gated communities that characterize much of Phoenix’s suburban landscape. Between 1990 and 2009, the population of Cave Creek proper nearly doubled from 2900 to 5500 residents; this growth was consistent with Maricopa County’s overall demographic boom during this period, as its population increased from 2 million to 4 million according to the 2010 Census.

Affluent professionals were not the only population that arrived in Cave Creek and proximate northern Maricopa County suburbs during this period, however. The tremendous demand for labor in construction and landscaping to keep up with this



Figure 1: Residential developments in Cave Creek, Arizona.

population growth created ample opportunities for immigrant laborers, largely from Mexico and Latin America, to find employment. Given that most of these immigrant workers could not afford the high cost of living in Cave Creek, they tended to arrive daily to solicit work instead, lining the streets of the sidewalk-free Cave Creek Road, the main thoroughfare that runs through the town. Some of those that did stay in the community would camp in the washes (dry river beds characteristic of this part of Arizona) surrounding Cave Creek. As such, it is difficult to quantify the day labor population

(local officials estimated it to be in the hundreds daily), but it was large enough to make a strong imprint in the community.

Tensions arose in Cave Creek as a result of these demographic changes, as the Town Council began to hear complaints from its affluent suburban population about the presence of the day laborers and their potential threat to both property values and public safety. In response, then-vice mayor Ralph Mozilo approached a local Episcopalian Church, Good Shepherd of the Hills, about the possibility of running a day worker center out of the Church's parking lot. Ultimately, the Center evolved into a highly functional mechanism for both removing day laborers from the streets and providing them a formal outlet to find work. The Center had identification cards printed for the workers to regulate employment; volunteers provided medical assistance to the laborers and ensured that they were fairly compensated for their work; and local businesses donated used supplies and leftover food and drink to the Center.

The presence of the center drew the ire of both local and regional actors, however, who viewed the center as facilitating illegal activity. For example, Don Sorchych, the editor of the influential local newspaper *The Sonoran News*, would spend hours each day photographing individuals who hired the day laborers, and later would publish the photographs in his newspaper. Additionally, the laborers at the center became subject to multiple forms of harassment. The American Freedom Riders, an Arizona-based motorcycle club with an explicitly anti-illegal immigration mission



Figure 2: Directions for day laborers at Good Shepherd of the Hills.

statement, would ride armed (which is legal in Arizona) through the Center and protest its activities. Later, Maricopa County Sheriff's deputies started arriving at the Church, originally to intimidate the laborers; eventually, however, they began to randomly detain and arrest suspected undocumented immigrants.

The rising tension within the community around this issue, frequently expressed by residents and non-residents at Town Council meetings, spurred Cave Creek authorities in 2007 to author two ordinances in an attempt to address the day labor situation. One ordinance prohibited multiple forms of loitering in the town; the other

was a traffic ordinance that essentially prohibited laborers from soliciting employment and employers from stopping their cars to hire the laborers. Both ordinances passed overwhelmingly, as did a resolution calling on the federal government to more strictly enforce its immigration policy. The ACLU of Arizona promptly sued Cave Creek on behalf of several laborers, and a judge later ruled in the ACLU's favor, costing Cave Creek around \$150,000 in legal and settlement expenses. While the ordinances were in effect for several months, local authorities never enforced them; however, due to the pressure of both Cave Creek residents and the Maricopa County Sheriff, the Good Shepherd of the Hills day labor center closed permanently in early 2008.

This brief account of Cave Creek's experiences suggests a number of reasons why the town eventually decided to enact exclusionary day labor ordinances in 2007. First, these ordinances were in part brought about by demographic changes. The day labor situation that led to this conflict would likely not have taken place save for the population and construction boom in the Phoenix metropolitan area in the 1990s and early 2000s. During this period, Cave Creek experienced both a large influx of affluent suburbanites and new immigrant laborers. Incidentally, while some of these new suburbanites took advantage of the available immigrant labor to build their houses and landscape their properties, others expressed deep concerns about the impact of the immigrant presence on property values and the image of Cave Creek. Additionally, as Cave Creek is located in a largely politically conservative area, it is perhaps unsurprising

that the town adopted a defensive/exclusionary stance toward (perceived undocumented) immigrants.

Additionally, the efforts to drive immigrant day laborers out of Cave Creek were led by a variety of individuals, not all of whom were directly associated with the town. *Sonoran News* editor Sorchych was key in cultivating resident anger about the presence of the day laborers; however, the rising tensions in the community were also influenced by the presence of outside activists like the American Freedom Riders at the day labor center, and the increasing frequency of arrests made by Maricopa County Sheriff's deputies. Further, while not necessarily an explanatory variable, the urban morphology of the Cave Creek area also contributed to the day labor issue. Given the lack of public space to congregate in Cave Creek and the absence of sidewalks along Cave Creek Road, day laborers would block local businesses and create a traffic hazard, which prompted complaints about the day labor presence from local residents and business owners.

Cave Creek is just one of the hundreds of local governments that considered local policies intended to address immigration-related issues since the mid-2000s. In turn, a growing legal and social science literature has sought to explain and theorize the emergence of these policy responses. This literature has largely focused exclusively on certain aspects of these policies – e.g. demographic, legal, or political influences – or has instead involved detailed case studies of one specific locality. As the example of Cave Creek demonstrates, however, a full understanding of the motivations behind its day

labor ordinances requires attention to a diverse slate of factors that include demography, multi-scalar political activism, and the local social geography. Further, it requires attention to the distinct geographies of these policies by situating them within the national landscape of immigration policy as well as the sometimes-complex political networks and jurisdictional hierarchies that enable or constrain local policy.

In this dissertation, I analyze the factors and conditions that have influenced local governments like Cave Creek to consider and/or implement local immigration policies. In doing so, I account for the diverse demographic, social, political, and geographic factors that underpin these policy responses. My approach includes both a national quantitative study of local immigration policies as well as an in-depth qualitative, comparative investigation of these policies in six suburban locales in three metropolitan areas. The remainder of this introduction is structured as follows. First, I provide some brief background on local immigration policies, and a review of the literature to date that has attempted to explain these policies. Second, I discuss the research design and methodology employed in this study. Finally, I introduce the three core chapters in this dissertation, which were originally written as independent scholarly articles.



## **Local immigration policies in the US: A review of the literature**

While the federal government holds plenary power over immigration policy, local governments have used a variety of different policies in recent years to attempt to control immigration to their local communities. Some of these policies have explicitly addressed immigration as a topic of local contention. The most notorious example is the Illegal Immigration Relief Act (IIRA) ordinance, first considered in San Bernardino, California but most commonly associated with Hazleton, Pennsylvania. Hazleton's IIRA ordinance, approved by its city council in 2006, includes directives that ban landlords from leasing property to undocumented immigrants, and institutes sanctions for employers of undocumented immigrants (City of Hazleton 2006). This IIRA ordinance was replicated in dozens of other localities across the United States, although no IIRA has to date been fully enforced (Gilbert 2009; Varsanyi 2011).

Other types of exclusionary policies use existing local authorities to drive out undocumented immigrants. One such method involves the deputization of local police officers to serve as de facto immigration agents, enabling them to make immigration-related arrests and begin deportation proceedings. Localities have accomplished this through the federal 287(g) program, which dates back to the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996 (IIRIRA) that enabled local authorities to apply for officer training from Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) (Coleman 2009).



Figure 3: Hazleton, Pennsylvania.

As of October 2010, ICE had signed 69 of these agreements with local governments (US ICE 2010). Other exclusionary policies involve the enforcement of new or existing ordinances that regulate activities and behavior that are purported to involve immigrant populations. Aside from restrictive day labor policies, these ordinances have included strict anti-overcrowding laws and impoundment ordinances that direct authorities to tow the cars of unlicensed drivers. While these policies rarely mention immigration explicitly, they are generally part of an immigration restriction strategy, as exemplified by Cave Creek.

While the majority of local immigration policies have been exclusionary in nature, around 100 local governments in the United States have considered or passed *inclusionary* immigration policies. Such policies have the stated intent of creating an inclusive environment for immigrants, regardless of legal status. The most well-known and controversial inclusionary policies are sanctuary ordinances, which among others, prohibit local authorities from inquiring into individuals' immigration status and from cooperating with ICE in immigration policing operations (Ridgley 2008). Other localities have adopted policies that are not as far-reaching as sanctuary ordinances, yet nonetheless include limitations on the abilities of local officials, especially police officers, from making immigration status inquiries for minor violations (Mitnik and Halpern-Finnerty 2010). Other examples of inclusive policies grant local rights to undocumented immigrants. For example, a small number of communities in Maryland have passed laws allowing all residents, regardless of immigration status, to register to vote in local elections (Hayduk 2006). Similarly, a number of cities across the United States have begun accepting the Mexican *matrícula consular* card as a valid form of identification, allowing immigrants to open bank accounts and use local libraries (Varsanyi 2006).

A fast-growing legal and social science literature has sought to explain why so many local governments have opted to consider local immigration policies (e.g. Varsanyi 2010). In large part, the legal studies literature has focused on the legality and

constitutionality of exclusionary local immigration policies. This literature has largely concluded that local immigration policies should be preempted by federal policy, which ought to have sole authority in immigration regulation (McKanders 2007; Harnett 2008). These authors also argue that many of these policies are discriminatory in nature, can lead to racial profiling, and violate federal anti-bias laws such as the Fair Housing Act (Rodriguez et al. 2007; Campbell 2007; Romero 2008). Other legal scholars, however, have contended that such policies are potentially justifiable as localities can serve as testing grounds for different types of immigration policies that likely would not gain traction at the federal level (Parlow 2007). Finally, some legal scholars have argued that local exclusionary policies are necessary, as they provide a way for localities to respond to the burdens placed on them by a federal failure to enforce immigration law (Ting 2007; Kobach 2009).

In the social sciences, scholarship on local immigration policies has included both theoretical examinations of how local immigration policies have been brought about by changes in US immigration policy, and detailed case studies of specific immigration policy proposals. In many instances, social scientists (especially within geography) have explained the prevalence of local immigration policies as in part an outcome of the devolution of federal responsibilities to local governments under neoliberalism. For example, Varsanyi (2008b) traces how Clinton-era policies such as the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (Welfare Reform) and IIRIRA

transferred in part the burden of immigrant service provision and immigration enforcement from the federal government to states and localities; such arguments are echoed by scholars such as Coleman (2007a) and Kretsedemas (2008). In turn, the increased role of local governments in immigration policy creates opportunities for a wide variety of local responses to immigration. Ellis (2006) and Varsanyi (2011) argue that exclusionary responses can be interpreted in part as an engagement in a politics of scale, as localities are responding to a neoliberal federal immigration policy that has both allowed in large numbers of immigrants and devolved to them the responsibilities for integrating immigrants. Wells (2004) shows that the decentralization of US immigration policy has also created a space for localities to pursue inclusive policy responses such as the sanctuary policies described above and found in San Francisco and other localities across the US.

A growing number of qualitative case studies of these policies, however, demonstrate that local immigration policies are not simply the outcome of the devolution of federal policy. In many ways, these studies show that locality-specific political and social dynamics influence local governments to consider these policies. For example, Gilbert (2009) shows how the IIRA ordinance passed in Hazleton was framed in part as a 'defense of place' against the large numbers of immigrants of color who had settled in the city; further, Hazleton's efforts were aided by national activist organizations including the Federation for American Immigration Reform (FAIR) and the

Minutemen. In their study of Farmers Branch, Texas and its IIRA ordinance, Brettell and Nibbs (2011) interpret the city's policy as both a defense of suburban middle class status against undocumented immigrants and an attempt to preserve an American "rule of law" that situated itself locally. Singer et al. (2009) also show how in Prince William County, a confluence of demographic changes, lack of local infrastructure to accommodate immigrants, and the concerted efforts of grassroots anti-immigrant activists helped push the County government to enact exclusionary policies. Further, as a small number of recent quantitative studies show, these localities enacting exclusionary policies exhibit some demographic similarities. For example, Ramakrishnan and Wong (2010) find that exclusionary policies are strongly linked to increased levels of political conservatism in a community; further, Hopkins (2010) demonstrates a positive relationship between exclusionary policies and rapid growth in the local foreign-born population.

This dissertation contributes to this literature through both a quantitative and qualitative case study analysis of both exclusionary and inclusionary local immigration policies. When I first designed the research project, this study was intended to be the first to combine both a quantitative analysis of local immigration policies with qualitative case studies of these policies. Varsanyi (2010) has since accomplished this, albeit through the contributions of multiple authors in an edited volume. The literature as a whole, however, has not sufficiently explored variations and linkages between

exclusionary and inclusive immigration policies, treating them instead as largely distinct and independent phenomena. Further, it has generally not explicitly considered how geography matters in the implementation of these policies. In this regard, geography refers to both mappable spatial variation in local policy implementation, and the role of social and political space in both facilitating and constraining the types of immigration policies that are considered and implemented by localities. In short, this dissertation is an investigation of how geographies influence both inclusive and exclusionary local policy responses to immigration.

### **Research design and methodology**

The first part of the dissertation is based on a national quantitative study of local immigration policies conducted from 2008 to early 2009. As part of this study, I constructed a database containing information on 369 local governments that had considered and/or enacted either inclusive or exclusionary local immigration policies up until February, 2009. To build this database, I merged information from existing databases compiled by the Fair Immigration Reform Movement, Mexican American and Puerto Rican Legal Defense Funds, and National Immigration Law Center. I cross-checked this information with local policy documents available from municipal and county web sites, and supplemented it with new information I gathered during the study period. After completing the database, I generated a random sample of US

municipalities that had not considered local immigration policies for purposes of comparison. I integrated both of these databases with local demographic, political, and economic information from the US Census and other sources. The quantitative analyses, which include both GIS mapping and regression modeling, account for how both geographic and demographic variables relate to both the presence and nature of local policy responses to immigration. I provide a more detailed account of this methodology in Chapter 2.

Based on the information I collected in the quantitative study, I identified three metropolitan areas for more detailed study: Chicago, Washington DC, and Phoenix. I selected these three metropolitan areas for the following reasons. First, each metropolitan area included both municipalities that had considered/implemented exclusionary immigration policies, and others that had considered/implemented inclusionary policies. These metropolitan area case studies were designed to provide more detailed insights into the processes that help explain why the nature of local immigration policies varies both within and across metropolitan areas. Second, each metropolitan area is representative of a different immigrant gateway type as specified by Singer (2004). Chicago represents a *continuous immigrant gateway*, which has historically and continues to have high levels of immigration; Washington represents an *emerging* immigrant gateway, which historically has had low levels of immigration but whose immigrant populations has increased rapidly since 1980; and Phoenix represents



a *re-emerging* immigrant gateway, where immigrant populations were once high in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, decreased mid-century, and have since increased again over the last thirty years. Finally, these metropolitan areas each represent different US regions: Phoenix (West), Chicago (Midwest), and Washington (Northeast/South).

From 2009 to 2010, I conducted a qualitative study of local immigration policy responses in these three metropolitan areas. In early 2009, I undertook a preliminary study of these metropolitan areas in order to identify two suburbs in each metropolitan area for further study: one with an *inclusive* immigration policy, and another with an *exclusionary* policy. I chose to focus on suburbs given that they are increasingly the preferred destinations for new immigrant populations (Singer 2008). Further, whereas central city politics often involve a negotiation of diverse constituencies and political issues, single issues like immigration have a greater potential to consume the politics of smaller, more homogeneous communities like suburbs (Oliver and Ha 2007). The suburbs I chose to study are Chandler and Cave Creek in the Phoenix area; Carpentersville and Evanston in the Chicago area; and Manassas (Virginia) and Takoma Park (Maryland) in the Washington, DC area. I provide a more detailed discussion of these case study suburbs in Chapters 3 and 4.

I collected background and archival information about the policy debates in each suburb in early 2009. This information included ordinance documentation available from city websites; archived city council minutes; video of city council meetings;

newsletters of activist organizations involved in the immigration policy debates; and media coverage of these policies. During the summer of 2009, I collected additional data through site visits to each suburb. In each of the six communities, I conducted semi-structured interviews with key participants in the local immigration policy debates. Interviews generally lasted between 30 and 90 minutes. My contacts included local officials, such as mayors and city council members (both former and incumbent); local law enforcement officials (police chiefs and assistant chiefs); immigration advocates (both immigrant and native-born); and local activists who mobilized both for and against these policies. I recruited these contacts based on my preliminary analysis of archival documents.

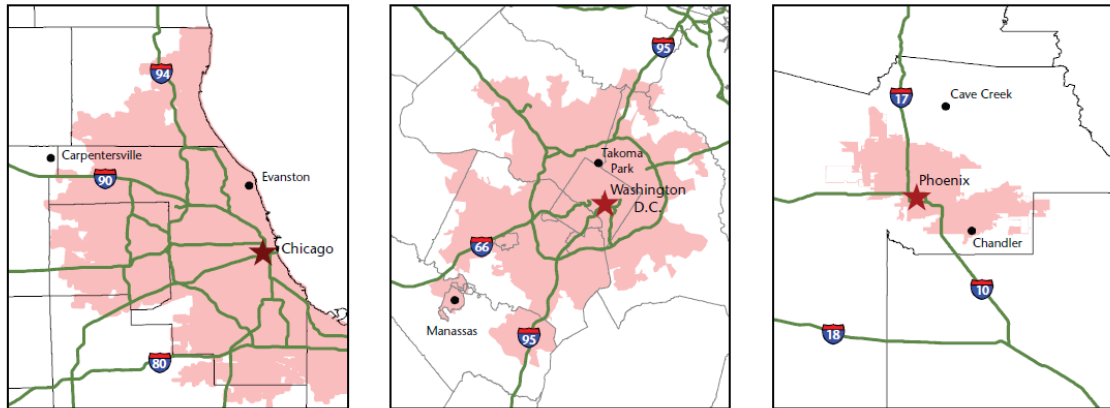


Figure 4: Location of study sites<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Figure 4 reprinted with permission from the Center for Urban and Regional Affairs (CURA), University of Minnesota. This figure was created by Jeffrey Matson, and originally appeared in the Fall/Winter 2010 issue (volume 40, no. 3-4) of the *CURA Reporter*.

While in each suburb, I also visited each city hall and local archives to collect local policy documents unavailable through Internet research, and gained additional insights through participant and ethnographic observation. After carrying out this research, I conducted follow-up interviews with contacts unavailable during my field visits; transcribed the interviews and did some basic coding for major themes; and continued to track immigration policy developments in each suburb and collect newly available documents.

### **Outline of the dissertation**

The dissertation is composed of three main chapters based on the aforementioned research. Each chapter is in the form of an independent scholarly article; in turn, there is some repetition in the description of research design, methodology, and the case studies among this introduction and the three core chapters.

Chapter 2 is a co-authored article with Helga Leitner that is published in the March 2011 issue of *Urban Geography* entitled “The Variegated Landscape of Local Immigration Policies in the United States.”<sup>2</sup> This chapter is based upon the database of local immigration policies compiled in 2008 and 2009. In this chapter, I use GIS mapping, descriptive statistics, and logistic regression to test a series of hypotheses regarding the introduction of local immigration policies. I find that municipalities with

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<sup>2</sup> Citation: Walker, K.E., and Leitner, H. (2011). The Variegated Landscape of Local Immigration Policies in the United States. *Urban Geography* 32(2), 156-178.

either large or fast-growing immigrant populations are more likely to introduce local immigration policies; further, exclusionary rather than inclusive policies tend to be found in municipalities with rapid foreign-born growth; lower levels of education; higher levels of Republican voting; in the US South; and in suburbs rather than central cities. The analysis and arguments in this paper form the basis for the following two chapters, which I will elaborate on in turn.

In Chapter 2, I argue that quantitative analysis alone is insufficient to explain the diverse factors that influence local governments to consider and implement local immigration policies, as it cannot easily account for the processes that shape local debates and policy implementation. Chapter 3, entitled “The Complex Spatiality of Local Policy Responses to Immigration,” is a response to this claim. This chapter is a comparative analysis of the six case study suburbs, building upon a theoretical framework about the spatiality of contentious politics introduced by Leitner et al. (2008). In their paper, Leitner et al. argue that multiple spatialities (e.g. scale, networks, place) are co-implicated in political geographic processes, and that none of these spatialities should be privileged above one another in political geographic analysis. In Chapter 3, I argue that the co-implication of the politics of scale, networking, and place is embedded in the decisions of local governments to implement local immigration policies. With these policies, localities engage in a *politics of scale*, as policies are framed as criticisms of federal immigration policy, but are also strongly influenced by

the politics of immigration at other scales in which they are embedded. Additionally, policies are influenced by a *politics of networking*, as activist organizations mobilized through networks in attempts to shape the dynamics of local immigration policy debates and influence policy implementation. However, policies are often contingent upon a *politics of place* of the locales in which they are considered, as each policy draws from the local identity of each particular community.

The third paper, found in Chapter 4, is a more detailed investigation of how the politics of place shapes exclusionary policies in US suburbs. This chapter is entitled “Immigration, Local Policy, and the American Dream in the Suburban United States.” In this chapter, I use qualitative evidence to examine the hypothesis proposed in Chapter 2 that the increased proclivity for suburban municipalities to enact exclusionary ordinances is in part a function of the association of the suburb as the site where the “American Dream” is realized, and in turn should be protected. I find that in the three suburban municipalities with exclusionary policies (Manassas, Carpentersville, and Cave Creek), proponents invoke a defense of the “American Dream” as a justification for these policies. However, I also find that these policies relate in part to broader insecurities about suburban economic decline and social change as a result of metropolitan decentralization, and that undocumented immigrants have in turn become the scapegoats for these insecurities.

In Chapter 5, I conclude the dissertation. In this brief conclusion, I discuss my future research on the topic of the local politics of immigration, and reflect on the implications of my findings.

## **CHAPTER 2: THE VARIEGATED LANDSCAPE OF LOCAL IMMIGRATION POLICIES IN THE UNITED STATES**

### **Introduction**

Across the United States, nearly 370 local governments have proposed or implemented policies designed to address issues of undocumented immigration in their communities, largely since 2005. Some scholars situate these policies within a broader trend of the devolution of immigration responsibilities to local levels (Ellis 2006; Coleman 2007a, b; Varsanyi 2008b). They have observed that local governments, rather than the federal government, are not only managing immigration integration and service provision, but are increasingly engaging in immigration control and policing. One such example is the 287(g) program, which allows localities to enter into a partnership with the federal government to deputize local police officers to check the immigration status of detainees and commence with deportation proceedings (Shahani and Greene 2009). This devolution of immigration policy, argue some scholars, has effectively ‘pushed the border inward’ from national to local scales, making immigration status an increasingly salient issue at local levels (Coleman 2007b; Varsanyi 2008b).

Many local immigration policies, however, are less an outcome of the devolution of immigration enforcement to local scales, than they are ‘grassroots’ responses to the presence (or potential presence) of undocumented immigrants (Wells 2004; Varsanyi 2008a). Some local ordinances have targeted immigrants specifically on the basis of

their legal status, passing ordinances to fine businesses or landlords who employ or rent to individuals without proof of legal residence. Other localities have pursued immigration restriction strategies ‘through the backdoor’ by amending or strictly enforcing housing codes to target overcrowding by immigrant laborers, or placing restrictions on unlicensed day labor markets (Rodriguez 2008; Varsanyi 2008a).

In Northern Virginia, for example, counties and municipalities in the Washington, DC suburbs have pursued a wide variety of these strategies to discourage the settlement of undocumented immigrants in their communities. A number of local governments in the region participate in the 287(g) program, including Prince William and Loudoun Counties, as well as the cities of Herndon, Manassas, and Manassas Park (US ICE 2008a). In response to charges of racial profiling, Prince William County has taken immigration policing one step further by checking the immigration status of *all persons* detained by the police (Singer et al. 2009). Additionally, Prince William County passed a measure requiring all business owners in the county to prove their legal residence in the US (Mack 2009). Other localities such as Manassas and Stafford County have changed the meaning of ‘family’ in zoning codes to limit the number of persons who can live in a single-family housing unit, and in Herndon officials have attempted to place limits on the ability of day laborers to congregate within the city limits (McCrummen 2006; Hosh 2008; MacDonald 2008).



Not all localities implementing local immigration policies have sought to exclude undocumented immigrant populations, however. According to our survey of local immigration policies across the United States, nearly 100 cities and counties have either proposed or established immigrant ‘sanctuary’ ordinances, including measures stating that local authorities will not check residents’ immigration status; pursued other integrative strategies such as the extension of local voting rights to noncitizens, the acceptance of Mexican *matrícula consular* ID cards as a valid form of identification; or passed local resolutions in support of the rights of undocumented residents (Wells 2004; Varsanyi 2006; Ridgley 2008). One such example of such an inclusionary policy is the sanctuary ordinance enacted by Takoma Park, Maryland, first passed in 1985 and reaffirmed in 2007. The ordinance stipulates that no Takoma Park official may assist Immigration and Customs Enforcement in carrying out investigations or arrests based upon an individual’s immigration status. It also prohibits any inquiries into, or discrimination based upon the citizenship status of individuals in Takoma Park, and stresses that information regarding citizenship status should remain strictly confidential (City of Takoma Park 2007). Thus the adoption of these different types of these policies varies across space. Whereas Takoma Park and the aforementioned localities in Northern Virginia coexist within the same metropolitan area, and are within just 30 miles of one another, their responses to undocumented immigration are drastically different.

The policies discussed above are merely a few examples of the diverse local immigration policies that have proliferated across the United States during the past 5-10 years. To date there exists no comprehensive study of this variegated landscape of local immigration policies, and no single institution that assembles information on all different local immigration policies. The purpose of this paper is to examine the nature of and reasons for the distinct geographies of local immigration policies – i.e. the geographic patterns of, and reasons behind the adoption of, policies designed either to promote immigrant integration or to exclude (undocumented) immigrants from settling within their jurisdiction and drive them out. This is the first of two papers that seek to analyze and interpret a national database on local immigration ordinances that the authors have assembled, in order to test a number of propositions and hypotheses put forth by immigration scholars about the factors and conditions influencing the local politics of immigration.

We start with a brief visual representation and description of the geographic patterns of local immigration policies at the national and metropolitan scale. This is followed by a review of existing scholarship and propositions on local immigration politics. We identify and test the following hypotheses: First, local immigration politics becomes a more salient issue in localities where immigrants have concentrated (Wells 2004, Ellis 2006). Second, it is the pace of change in the immigrant population (rather than the spatial concentration of immigrants) that results in the introduction of local

anti-illegal immigration policies (Esbenshade 2007). Third, anti-immigrant sentiments tend to decrease with increased education and economic security, and with lower levels of unemployment and racial prejudice. Fourth, ideological conservatism and strong nationalistic sentiments are positively related to attitudes supporting immigration restrictions. Fifth, drawing on the findings of some qualitative case studies, we propose that dominant imaginaries of place and community (national as well as local) may influence the type of policy that is considered and implemented. We hypothesize that local communities that value and respect cultural and racial diversity of their place and the national community are more likely to reject anti-immigration ordinances and/or favor pro-immigration ordinances; whereas local communities that value cultural homogeneity are more likely to support anti-immigration ordinances.

### **Geographical divides of local immigration policies**

The spatial distribution of local immigration policies across the United States exhibits some distinctive patterns<sup>3</sup>. For example, in some metropolitan regions, such as

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<sup>3</sup> The information in this section is based upon a database, assembled by the authors, of 369 US localities (281 municipalities and 88 counties) that had proposed or implemented an immigration or immigration-related policy as of February 2009. Pro-immigration policies include sanctuary ordinances, policies granting local rights to undocumented immigrants (e.g. voting rights, ID cards), and resolutions in support of a path to legalization for undocumented immigrants. Anti-immigration policies include 287(g) agreements; Illegal Immigration Relief Act ordinances; and local laws such as anti-day labor policies, housing/zoning laws, or English-only policies where the policy debates addressed undocumented immigration.

the San Francisco Bay Area, the majority of local policy responses are pro-immigration in nature, with cities such as San Francisco, Oakland, Richmond, Berkeley, and Santa Cruz all having implemented inclusive policies. In many Southern states, including Alabama, Georgia, South Carolina, and North Carolina, however, local governments have overwhelmingly proposed or enacted some sort of exclusionary policy. In North Carolina alone, 15 counties have anti-illegal immigration policies in operation, over half of which are in the form of some sort of agreement with Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) including the 287(g) program and the 'Secure Communities' program, which allows local governments to check arrested individuals' information against immigration records held by the Department of Homeland Security (Weissman et al. 2009; US ICE 2008b)<sup>4</sup>. Figure 5 demonstrates the geographical distribution of municipalities in the US that have proposed or implemented local scale immigration policies<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>4</sup> Since we completed the data collection and analysis for this paper, the Secure Communities program has undergone fundamental changes. While during the Bush Administration the program was limited to a select number of US counties, the Obama Administration has initiated an expansion of this program, with a stated desire to extend Secure Communities to counties nationwide by 2013. In turn, our maps in this paper do not reflect this expansion of Secure Communities by the Obama Administration, which includes Fairfax County, Virginia at the time of this writing. Our quantitative analyses, which are limited to municipalities, remain unaffected by these developments as Secure Communities is a county-level program.

<sup>5</sup> In our tabular and statistical analyses of the paper, we limit the sample of ordinance localities to municipalities, in order to adequately assess variations across urban, suburban, and rural areas and to ensure that the localities in these analyses are geographically independent of one another. A more detailed discussion of this methodological decision is found in the "Methodology" section.

The geographical divides evident in Figure 5 are summarized by region in Table 1, which shows statistically significant regional differences in the nature of local immigration ordinances adopted. The South stands out with nearly 90 percent of municipalities in the sample introducing anti-immigration policies as opposed to pro-immigration policies. This underlines findings from Winders (2007) and Haubert and Fussell (2006), which suggest that anti-immigration attitudes may be more prevalent in the South due to historical legacies of segregation and racism.

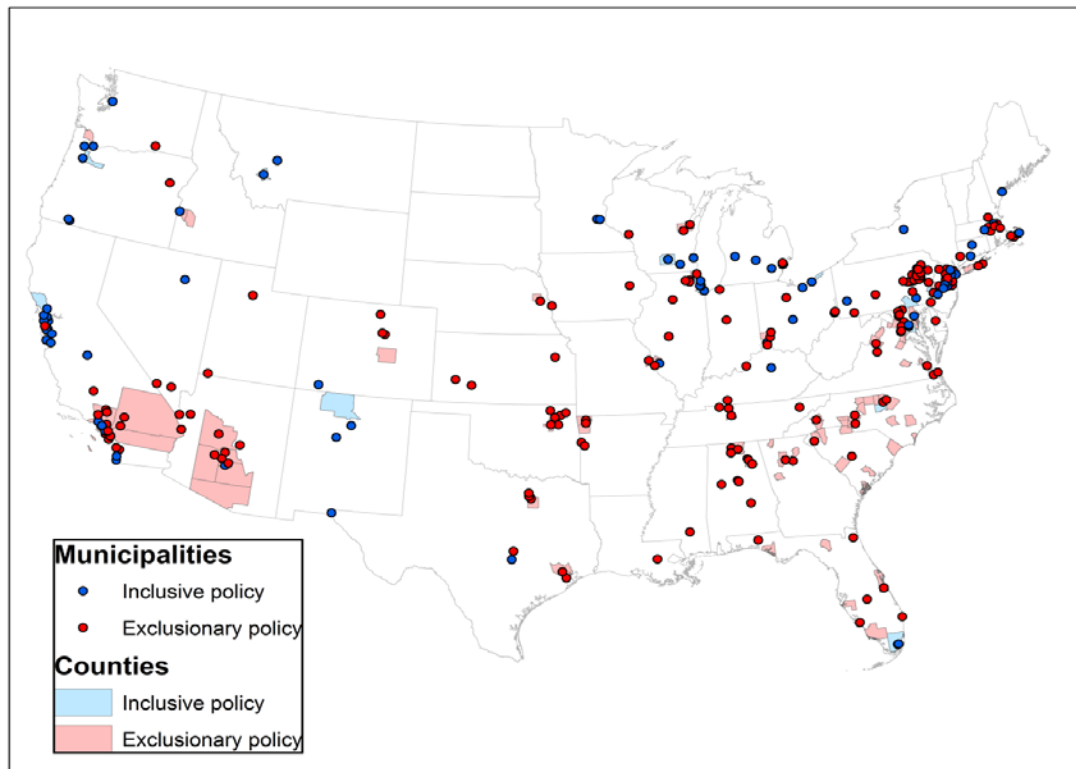


Figure 5: The geographical distribution of local immigration policies in the US as of February, 2009.

In contrast, the West is the only region where a majority of municipalities in the sample have adopted pro-immigration policies (52 percent). Within the sample, 57 percent of municipalities in the Midwest and 74 percent in the Northeast have introduced local immigration ordinances designed to keep out or deter the settlement of immigrants rather than incorporate them. One area of concentration in the Northeast is Pennsylvania, which contains 40 municipalities that have considered or introduced local immigration policies.

US Region	Percent Pro ( <i>n</i> of ordinance municipalities in the region)	Percent Anti	Total
West	52.2(36)	47.8 (33)	69
Midwest	43.2 (19)	56.8 (25)	44
South	11.5 (9)	88.5 (69)	78
Northeast	25.6 (23)	74.4 (67)	90
All ordinance municipalities	31.0 (87)	69.0 (194)	281

Table 1: Regional distribution of ordinance municipalities, by ordinance type. Includes the full sample of ordinance municipalities,  $n=281$ . Census Region definitions from the US Census Bureau are used. Chi-square test:  $p<.001$

The most prominent example of a local immigration enforcement policy in Pennsylvania is Hazleton, an old coal mining town in the east-central part of the state, which passed its Illegal Immigration Relief Act (IIRA) in 2006. This ordinance made it

illegal for business owners to employ undocumented immigrants, and required all businesses to sign an affidavit with the city of Hazleton declaring that they do not knowingly employ undocumented workers in order to obtain a business permit. The ordinance also stipulated that landlords were prohibited from renting to undocumented immigrants in the town (City of Hazleton 2006). Hazleton concomitantly passed an ordinance declaring English to be the town's official language (McKanders 2007). Dozens of other small towns in central and eastern Pennsylvania followed suit with similar proposals. However, after Hazleton's IIRA was struck down in court, most of these towns tabled their resolutions (Guydish 2007).

Figure 5 also reveals a significant clustering of both inclusive and exclusionary local ordinances in the northeastern metropolitan corridor stretching from Washington, DC to Boston<sup>6</sup>. Indeed, the localization of immigration policy has produced such a policy 'patchwork' in metropolitan areas across the United States, where the nature of a local immigration policy may vary from locality to locality within the same region. This 'patchwork' is particularly well-exemplified in the Baltimore/Washington metropolitan region, which includes the aforementioned Northern Virginia localities as well as Takoma Park. Figure 6 shows the landscape of immigration policies proposed in the Baltimore/Washington region.

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<sup>6</sup> This clustering of ordinances is in part a function of the fragmented and dense municipal geography of the Northeast; as such, similar clusters may be absent elsewhere due to differences in municipal geography.

Four localities in this metropolitan area have policies limiting the role of local officials in immigration enforcement in place, including the central cities of Baltimore and Washington, suburban Prince George's County, and Takoma Park. A fifth locality, the city of Mount Rainier in Prince George's County, tabled its proposed sanctuary ordinance in 2008 amidst heated resident disagreements about the policy (Constable 2008a), and Arlington and Alexandria, while without official "sanctuary" policies, have passed resolutions in support of immigrants. By contrast, local governments in the outer-suburban and exurban parts of this metropolitan area have enacted very different types of local immigration policies, including the exclusionary policies of the Northern Virginia counties, as well as localities such as Frederick County in Maryland, which participates in 287(g) and has passed a resolution declaring English to be the county's official language (Bernhardt 2008; Constable 2008b).

The geography of local immigration policy responses in the metropolitan area exhibits a distinctive pattern, with inclusionary central cities and inner ring suburbs with longer histories of racial and economic diversity, exclusionary outer ring suburbs with historically more homogeneous populations, and some conflicted communities between these areas. Examples include localities such as Fairfax County in Virginia and



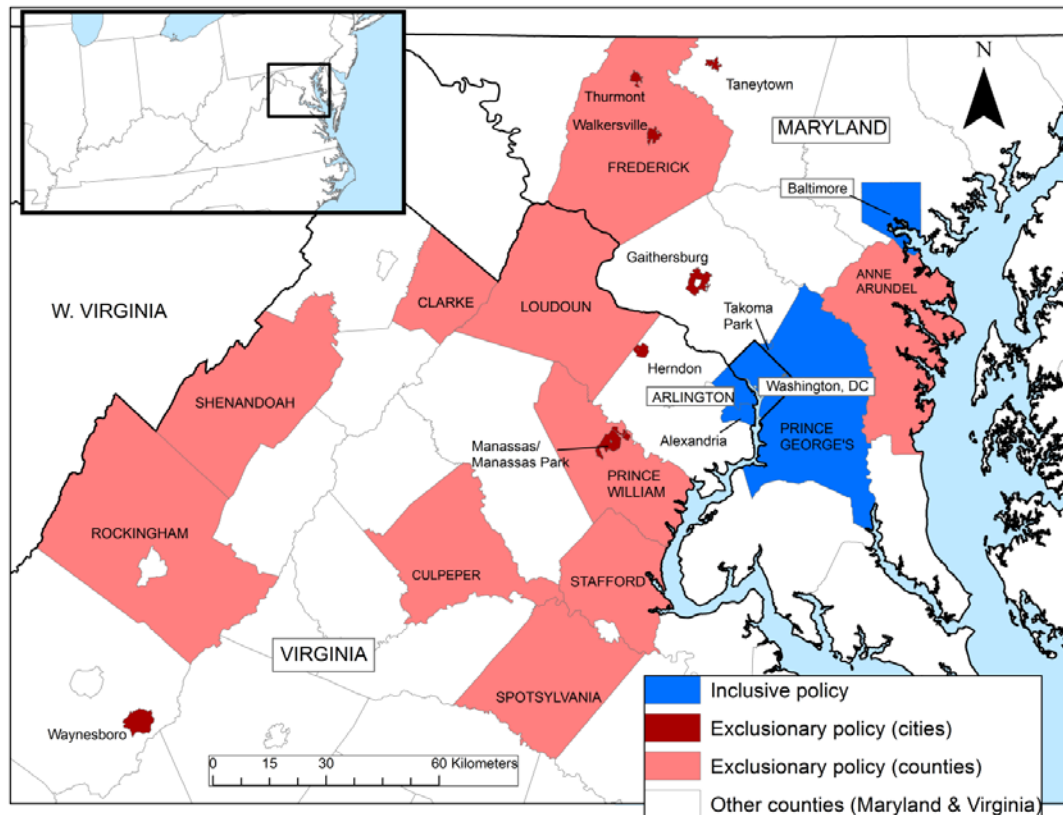


Figure 6: The landscape of local immigration policies either proposed or implemented in the DC/Baltimore metropolitan area, as of February 2009.

Montgomery County in Maryland, which have struggled to accommodate both demands for stricter immigrant enforcement among some residents and the needs of their established immigrant populations (Morse and Miroff 2009). However, there have been localized instances of anti-immigration policy activism in Herndon (Fairfax County) and Gaithersburg (Montgomery County), and Fairfax County now participates in the Secure Communities program (see Footnote 3).

Metropolitan location	Percent pro ( <i>n</i> of ordinance municipalities in this category)	Percent anti	Total
Central city	60.6 (43)	39.4 (28)	71
Suburb	24.0 (25)	76.0 (79)	104
Rural	17.9 (19)	82.1 (87)	106
All locations	31.0 (87)	69.0 (194)	281

Table 2: Metropolitan/non-metropolitan location of ordinance municipalities, by ordinance type. Includes the full sample of ordinance municipalities,  $n=281$ . Chi-square test:  $p<.001$

These intra-metropolitan variations in local immigration policies are summarized in Table 2, which shows statistically significant differences in the nature of local immigration policies between central cities, suburbs, and rural areas. Whereas almost two-thirds of central city municipalities in the sample have considered or implemented inclusionary policies, more than three-fourths of suburban and over 80 percent of the rural municipalities have introduced anti-immigration ordinances. These findings support Fennelly and Federico (2008), who find that suburban and rural residents are much more likely to favor restrictive US immigration policies than residents of central cities. Below, we review the pertinent literature examining factors and conditions that help explain the geographic patterns and presence of local anti- or pro-immigration sentiment and policies.

## **Factors and conditions influencing the nature of local immigration politics**

Scholars have interpreted the rise of these local immigration policies as a “politics of scale,” a struggle between different tiers of government over rights and responsibilities regarding immigration control and policing (Ellis 2006; Varsanyi 2008b). The federal level retains the right to regulate the entry and exit of immigrants at the national border, but since the mid-1990s the Welfare Reform Act has downloaded some responsibilities for the well-being of immigrants to lower tiers of government. As a result, state and local governments have become increasingly responsible for providing social services to immigrants. Ellis (2006) has argued that this “scalar tension” has rendered the politics of immigration more intense at sub-national scales.

Both Miriam Wells (2004) and Mark Ellis (2006) have independently proposed that the local politics of immigration in the US is directly related to the geography of immigration, namely that local immigration politics becomes a much more salient issue in localities where immigrants have concentrated. Despite the similarity of their arguments, Wells and Ellis focus on divergent types of sub-national immigration politics. Wells contends that the decentralization of immigration policy in the US has opened up a space for local governments to pursue integrative measures, notably in places of high immigrant concentration, whereas Ellis theorizes that the spatial concentration of immigrants can produce nativist anti-immigration reactions. As such, these arguments suggest that immigrant concentration may produce contradictory outcomes. The

divergent propositions of Ellis and Wells bear distinct resemblance to competing “contact” and “threat” hypotheses about the relationships between socio-cultural contact and the nature of acceptance or antagonisms between groups. Numerous studies, particularly in social psychology, have found support for the “contact hypothesis,” which posits that contact between diverse groups may lead to a reduction of intergroup hostilities (Hood and Morris 1997; Cain et al. 2000; Pettigrew and Tropp 2006). Other scholarship, however, proposes precisely the opposite. For example, Olzak (1992) proposes a model of ‘ethnic competition,’ which supposes that contact between groups can breed economic competition and ultimately interethnic conflict (Citrin et al. 1997).

Recent papers by Esbenshade (2007) and Esbenshade and Obzurt (2008) suggest that it is the pace of demographic change, rather than the absolute concentration of immigrant populations, that influences the decision of a locality to implement a local immigration policy. In their analyses of demographic trends in localities that proposed or implemented anti-immigration ordinances, they find that while the absolute concentration of immigrants in these communities was below national averages, the rate of growth of their immigrant populations outpaced national trends. Similarly, in a study of the US localities participating in 287(g) programs, Shahani and Greene (2009) find that while crime rates in these areas tend to be below national averages, the rate of growth of the Hispanic population is greater than the US as a whole. These analyses,

however, generally neglect to consider how locality-specific characteristics in places where immigrants have settled may influence the nature of a local immigration policy response. As such, it is possible that these local policies also reflect an outgrowth of particular socio-economic or attitudinal characteristics of local residents that in turn relate to divergent attitudes towards immigration and immigrants.

Ramakrishnan and Wong's (2007) study of variations in proposed or implemented immigration ordinances finds no statistically significant relationship between the local demography of immigration and the nature of a locality's immigration policy. Instead they identify political persuasion (percent Republican voting at the county level) as the major factor influencing anti-immigration policies, and note the positive influence of the presence of pro-immigration protests on pro-immigration policies. However, the demographic data used in their paper is only current as of the 2000 Census. In contrast, as elaborated below, our analyses in this paper employ the most recent demographic estimates (2005-07) from the US Census Bureau in order to capture the very recent implementation of many of these policies. Further, our explanatory variables differ from Ramakrishnan and Wong since we are specifically concerned with testing the aforementioned hypotheses about the determinants of attitudes towards immigration in the context of local immigration policies, as well as measuring how the distribution of immigration ordinances varies geographically.

Scholars have formulated a variety of theoretical and empirical propositions to explain individual attitudes towards immigration. This scholarship has reached a near-consensus that opposition to immigration tends to decrease with increased education (Wilkes et al. 2008). For example, in an investigation of the determinants of pro-immigration attitudes in the US, Haubert and Fussell (2006) find that holders of advanced university degrees are the most likely to espouse positive perceptions of immigrants, whereas individuals without college degrees tend to view immigration unfavorably. Such findings are confirmed by a host of other studies (Espenshade and Hempstead 1996; Fetzer 2000; Chandler and Tsai 2001; Barkan 2003; Pantoja 2006; Wilkes et al. 2008). Some researchers have attributed this strong relationship to labor market factors, claiming that more educated individuals are less likely to face economic competition from immigrants (Espenshade and Hempstead 1996). Numerous scholars have further asserted that working class-individuals or those at risk of unemployment will be more likely to oppose immigration, given that they will be competing with low-skilled immigrants in the labor market and wish to preserve their economic self-interest (Kessler 2001; Scheve and Slaughter 2001; Mayda 2006; O'Rourke and Sinnott 2006).

Studies testing the economic competition hypothesis have produced mixed results, however. Whereas some studies have found that low-skilled workers are more likely to oppose immigration than the highly skilled (Kessler 2001), other scholarship has not found any significant relationship between personal economic circumstances and

attitudes towards immigration (Citrin et al. 1997; Burns and Gimpel 2000). In fact, many of these studies have argued that it is the *perception* of increased economic insecurity due to immigration rather than actual labor market competition with immigrants that influences opinions about immigration policy (Pantoja 2006; Wilkes et al. 2008).

Such findings suggest that pre-existing attitudes or prejudices directed at immigrants may outweigh individual calculations of economic interest. Dustmann and Preston (2004), for example, analyze the impacts of both economic characteristics and racial attitudes (such as attitudes towards inter-racial marriage, or admitted racial biases) on individual attitudes towards immigration and immigrants. They find that racial attitudes are a much stronger predictor of the nature of these attitudes than labor market insecurity. Similarly, in an analysis of national survey data, Fennelly and Federico (2008) find that the strongest predictors of support for tighter immigration policies/control are negative attitudes towards multiculturalism and perceptions of immigration as an economic and social burden. Similar results are found in studies measuring the relationships between political ideology and attitudes towards immigration, as ideological conservatism and strong nationalistic attachments are consistently related to support for immigration restrictions (Espenshade and Hempstead 1996; Chandler and Tsai 2001; Scheve and Slaughter 2001; Barkan 2003; Valenty and Sylvia 2004; Semyonov et al. 2006; Ceobanu and Escandell 2008). Haubert and Fussell (2006) further reveal that measures of 'cosmopolitanism,' which they measure as

increased education, having lived abroad, and an ideological rejection of ethnocentrism, are strong predictors of pro-immigration attitudes.

### **The significance of geography**

Few quantitative studies have explicitly accounted for how these socio-economic, cultural, and political variables may vary by different types of geographic location, and how geography matters in the formulation of local immigration policies. One exception is Fennelly and Federico (2008), who specifically investigate the relationship between individual residence in a rural area and attitudes towards immigration policy. While they find that rural residents do tend to express stronger support for restrictive immigration policies than residents of central cities, this relationship is explained by the attitudes towards multiculturalism held by rural residents rather than their place of residence itself. Similarly, Haubert and Fussell (2006), finding that Southern survey respondents are the most likely to view immigrants negatively, suggest that this perception is not intrinsic to the “Southern” location of these respondents, but rather that other independent variables associated with disdain for immigrants tend to be more prevalent in the South, e.g. a lack of ‘cosmopolitanism’ as previously defined.



These quantitative studies are working with a conception of geography that highlights variations across space and conceives of geographic location as an independent variable. As Agnew (1987) has argued, however, place is more than simply relative location; but consists also of *locale*, and *sense of place*; with locale referring to the physical context for social relations, and sense of place as “the subjective orientation that can be engendered by living in a place.” (Agnew 1987, 5-6). For example, more than simply a relative location, living in the US South engenders certain social relations and belief systems, including race relations and race thinking, and conceptions of nation and place. Thus in her study of immigration politics in the US South, Winders (2007) shows how anti-immigration initiatives in Southern states and localities have to be understood within the context of distinct Southern spatial imaginaries of social and cultural belonging. She contends that arguments in support of immigration enforcement frame such policy responses as protecting a Southern ‘way of life,’ and points out how fears of undocumented immigrants of color as carriers of disease draw upon past discourses of racial threat present in the South since the Civil War. Similarly, as Archer (2005) suggested, suburbia has historically been constructed as the place where metropolitan residents can realize their “American Dream” of property ownership and upward mobility. In many instances the association of suburbia with the “American Dream” has been restricted to white, middle-class Americans, who have used policies such as exclusionary zoning to keep out racial minorities and defend

property values (Freund 2007). Contemporary anti- immigration policies in suburbia may be seen as a continuation of this exclusive white suburban imaginary.

Similarly, in her qualitative analysis of white residents' responses to immigrant of color in small towns in the rural Upper Midwest, Leitner (2011) shows how white residents' racialization of and racism towards immigrants of color is informed by their understanding of the rural Midwest as a white place. The racialization of immigrants serves to defend white privilege and culture and to recover an imagined idealized place and past, as well as to establish conditions of belonging to the national and local community. Drawing on the insights of these studies, we suggest that in order to interpret how geography matters in anti- or pro-immigrant initiatives we also need to pay attention to the history of social/power relations (broadly conceived) in particular places that in turn help construct and reconstruct certain belief systems, such as race thinking, conceptions of the nation, and place.

Recognizing that place is more than location helps us understand why places occupying the same type of location, e.g. suburbia, might be associated with contrasting imaginaries of community and place, which are in turn rooted in contrasting imaginaries of the nation. These include an *inclusive* imaginary that welcomes racial and cultural diversity rooted in an open and constantly emerging conception of multicultural community, place and nation; versus an *exclusive* imaginary that desires cultural homogeneity and is rooted in clearly bounded conceptions of a white community,

nation and place. Thus we hypothesize that anti-immigration ordinances are more likely to be introduced in places where the majority of the residents and local government official hold on to an understanding of the American nation and their locality as primarily a white place. The introduction of exclusionary immigration policies can be seen as serving to defend white dominance and privilege. In terms of exclusionary policies introduced by suburban municipalities it is the dominant association of the suburb as the place of the realization of the American dream, which we hypothesize helps explain the prevalence of anti-immigration ordinances in suburban municipalities.

## **Methodology**

In this analysis, we test the validity of the hypotheses emerging from the literature discussed above. We assess the relationship between foreign-born concentration and pace of demographic change and the presence of local immigration ordinances. We ascertain whether conclusions about the relationship between socio-demographic and cultural characteristics and attitudes towards immigration and immigrant at the individual level can in fact be used to explain local political responses to immigration. Finally, we provide a preliminary analysis of the significance of place in understanding the local politics of immigration. We use regression analyses to test relationships between municipal foreign-born concentration, aggregate socio-economic

characteristics, and the presence or absence of local immigration ordinances; and textual analysis of ordinance documents from communities in the Washington, DC metropolitan area to provide preliminary insights into how local immigration ordinances draw on locally-contingent understandings of nation and place.

The information analyzed and presented in this paper is based upon a database, assembled by the authors, of localities that either had proposed or implemented an immigration or immigration-related policy as of February 2009 (See Footnote 2). We cannot contend that this is a “complete” database of all localities with immigration ordinances given the continually changing landscape of these policies. This database, however, provides a representative portrait of the geography of local-scale immigration ordinances in the US. Our sources include databases on local immigration policies produced by the Fair Immigration Reform Movement, the Mexican American and Puerto Rican Legal Defense Funds, and the National Immigration Law Center. We then cross-checked and supplemented this information with data on local ordinances from our own collection of national and local media documents.

Our quantitative analyses focus on a subset of 174 municipalities that have proposed or implemented local immigration policies, for the following reasons. First, considering the very recent implementation of many of these policies, we wanted to include the most recent socio-demographic information from the US Census Bureau, i.e.

data for the period 2005-2007, rather than the 2000 Census<sup>7</sup>. For confidentiality reasons, these data are only accessible for settlements with populations greater than 20,000; therefore, we had to limit our sample accordingly.

We also decided to exclude counties from our quantitative analysis. We recognize that many of the most prominent local scale immigration policies have been implemented at the county scale (e.g. Prince William County), and that county governments are indeed the most salient local political bodies in many parts of the country. However, we limit our quantitative analysis to municipalities in part to measure differences in ordinance implementation across central cities, suburbs, and rural areas. This distinction is difficult to retain for counties, given the possibility that a US county may include combinations of these categories within its boundaries. Further, the localization of immigration policy in the US has produced a complex scalar articulation of policies that may overlap each other, as observed by Varsanyi (2008b). For example, while the city of Los Angeles has implemented a sanctuary policy, Los Angeles County, which contains the city, is participating in the 287(g) program. We thus also limit the analysis to municipalities to ensure that all units are politically independent of one another and do not overlap geographically.

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<sup>7</sup> We use data from the 2005-2007 American Community Survey estimates, which average data collected for localities for 2005, 2006, and 2007.

For purposes of comparison, we also include in our analysis a stratified random sample of US municipalities with populations greater than 20,000 that have not implemented or proposed any local immigration policies<sup>8</sup>. Among the ordinance localities, we distinguish between municipalities that have proposed or implemented *pro-immigration policies* (for example, sanctuary policies, other integrative resolutions such as extending voting rights to undocumented immigrants, or other resolutions in opposition to exclusionary immigration policies) and those that have considered or enacted *anti-immigration policies*, including policies such as housing/employment restrictions, English-only resolutions, and participation in the 287(g) program. We use this distinction (pro, anti, or no ordinance) as the primary dependent variable in our analyses.

## Results/findings

Table 3 displays descriptive statistics for the means of the socio-economic variables used to test hypotheses about the implementation of local immigration policies, by type of municipality. Variables measuring percent foreign-born and foreign-born growth between 2000 and the 2005-07 Census estimates are introduced to test

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<sup>8</sup> We took stratified random samples based upon the US region of the locality (West, Midwest, South, and Northeast) and metropolitan location (urban, suburban, and rural), and subsequently produced sample weights for these municipalities in order to represent municipalities in the US at large.

the hypotheses that immigrant concentration and the rate of change in the immigrant population have an influence on the introduction of local immigration ordinances. The roles of education (percent with bachelor's degree or higher) and economic marginality (median household income, unemployed) are also evaluated with variables measuring bachelor's degree attainment, median household income, and unemployment in municipalities. We also include a variable on percent owner-occupied housing to test the hypothesis that one of the key strategies to deter the settlement of immigrants has been to prevent the construction of multi-unit rental housing (Davis 1990, Light 2006). Finally, to assess the finding of Ramakrishnan and Wong (2007) about the influence of ideological conservatism on the presence of local anti-immigration policies, we include a variable measuring percent Republican voting at the county level<sup>9</sup>.

Table 3 shows that whereas the *absolute* concentration of the foreign-born tends to be highest in municipalities that have considered integrative policies, the *rate of growth* of the foreign-born population is significantly greater in exclusionary municipalities, with an average growth of 48 percent between 2000 and the most recent American Community Survey (ACS) estimates. Both types of ordinance municipalities display greater foreign-born concentration than the municipalities that have no local ordinance. Further, while pro-immigration municipalities tend to have more educated

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<sup>9</sup> We employ presidential voting data from the 2004 election at the county level to construct this variable, as municipality-level returns are unavailable.

Variable	Pro	Anti	No ordinance <sup>10</sup>
Percent foreign-born***	21.3	15.7	14.5
Percent growth of foreign-born population between 2000 and 2005-07***	10.1	47.6	33.6
Median household income**	\$48,130	\$52,941	\$54,183
Percent owner-occupied housing***	49.4	63.8	63.9
Percent of population with bachelor's degree or higher <sup>11**</sup>	32.5	27.1	28.2
Unemployment rate <sup>12***</sup>	8.3	6.5	7.0
Percent voting Republican at county level <sup>13***</sup>	35.5	54.5	47.5

Table 3: Averages of selected socio-economic characteristics for pro-, anti-, and no ordinance municipalities. Data source: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2005-2007 estimates. Accordingly, all municipalities in the sample have populations  $\geq 20,000$ .

populations than the other categories of municipalities in the sample, they also house a larger economically marginal population, as evidenced by lower median incomes, lower rates of owner-occupied housing, and higher unemployment levels. Finally, exclusionary policies tend to be found in more Republican areas. For example, municipalities with

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<sup>10</sup> Sample weights used.

<sup>11</sup> Includes individuals aged 25 and higher.

<sup>12</sup> Includes individuals in the labor force.

<sup>13</sup> 2004 presidential election. County data used due to unavailability of municipal-level data.

P-values for ANOVA tests: \* $p < .1$ , \*\* $p < .05$ , \*\*\* $p < .01$ .



anti-immigration ordinances were more likely to be located in Republican-leaning counties (measured by the Republican vote in the 2004 presidential election) than municipalities with no ordinance or pro-immigration ordinances (see Table 3).

To assess the relative influence of each explanatory variable on the decision of a municipality to implement a local immigration ordinance, we employed a binomial logistic regression analysis. We ran two separate models with the following binary dependent variables: 1) localities that have not implemented ordinances vs. localities with either type of immigration ordinance (pro- and anti-immigration ordinances) and 2) localities with pro-immigration ordinances vs. anti-immigration ordinances, with the localities that have not proposed or implemented local immigration policies excluded from the model. The results of these regressions are found in Table 4<sup>14</sup>.

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<sup>14</sup> For both models, tests of deviance residuals for spatial autocorrelation were performed in GeoDa using a nearest-neighbor spatial weighting scheme (Anselin, 2005; Banasick *et al.*, 2009). For Model 2, Moran's  $I = 0.04$ ,  $p=0.151$ , which indicates no significant spatial clustering of the residuals. For Model 1, Moran's  $I = 0.10$ ,  $p=0.001$ , which indicates the presence a significant but slight and spatially localized clustering in the residuals. Mapping reveals a clustering of large negative residuals in California. Our random sample of 'neutral' municipalities selected a number of these Californian cities, which are geographically clustered in the context of our national dataset of US municipalities because of the large number of municipalities in California with population  $\geq 20,000$  in the 2005-07 ACS. Because many of these 'neutral' California cities in the sample were classified as Western central cities with large immigrant populations, the model incorrectly predicted the presence of an ordinance in this cluster. As such, this spatial autocorrelation is attributable to the inevitable large presence of California cities in our dataset rather than a systematic bias in our analysis.

	Model 1			Model 2		
	$\beta$	SE	Odds-ratio	$\beta$	SE	Odds-ratio
US Region						
Midwest	-.405	.273	.667	.466	.837	1.594
South	-.653***	.243	.520	2.062***	.803	7.860
Northeast	.230	.247	1.258	1.537**	.775	4.652
Location type of municipality						
Suburban	-2.455***	.251	.086	2.107**	.912	8.227
Rural	-1.253***	.279	.286	.558	.979	1.748
Percent foreign-born	.043***	.008	1.044	-.022	.038	.978
Percent growth of foreign-born	.005**	.002	1.005	.033**	.015	1.034
Median household income (in \$10,000s)	.019	.091	1.019	.024	.373	1.024
Percent owner-occupied housing	-.007	.009	.993	.073**	.035	1.076
Percent with bachelor's degree or higher	.013	.010	1.013	-.064*	.039	.938
Percent unemployed	.011	.041	1.011	-.300**	.145	.741
Percent voting Republican	-.0001	.008	.999	.070***	.027	1.073
Constant	-1.313	.842	.269	-5.160*	3.072	.006
Pseudo- $R^2$	.171			.738		
N (weighted)	348 (1865)			174		

Table 4: Binomial logistic regressions. The dependent variables are coded as follows: For Model 1, no immigration ordinance = 0 and immigration ordinance (either pro or anti) = 1. For Model 2, pro-immigration ordinance = 0 and anti-immigration ordinance = 1. The omitted categories for the categorical variables are as follows: US Region: West, Location type: Central city. For more information about the sample, see Table 3. Data source: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2005-2007 estimates. Election data were obtained from CNN.com.

\* $p \leq 0.1$ . \*\* $p \leq 0.05$ . \*\*\* $p \leq 0.01$ .

Model 1, which assesses the likelihood of implementing any sort of ordinance, finds some geographic variation in the data, as municipalities in the South are less likely to implement ordinances than those in the West, and central cities are more likely to pursue local immigration initiatives than suburbs or rural areas, *ceteris paribus*. However, these findings may in part reflect the structure of the data: while a larger proportion of central cities have adopted local immigration policies, there are quantitatively far fewer central cities in the US than suburbs and rural municipalities. Further, the finding that cities in the West are more likely to propose policies than cities in the South also may reflect our decision to omit counties from our analysis, as 46 percent of Southern ordinance localities in our full database are counties, as opposed to only 19 percent in the West. Model 1 also reveals that both the size of the local foreign-born population and its rate of growth are strongly associated with the implementation of a local immigration policy. Such results confirm hypotheses from Wells (2004) and Ellis (2006) that immigration politics is directly related to the geography of immigration, as municipalities are much more likely to pass some sort of local immigration policy when the local immigrant population is either large or growing rapidly.

While the first model groups pro- and anti-immigration ordinance localities together in assessing how they differ from municipalities that have not enacted ordinances, Model 2 demonstrates that there are distinct variations between the two

subsets of enacting municipalities, with a large pseudo- $R^2$  of .738. In regards to the explanatory variables measuring the demography of immigration in these municipalities, the model reveals no significant difference in regards to foreign-born concentration, but does suggest that municipalities with rapidly growing foreign-born populations are more likely to enact anti-immigration initiatives. Such findings support those of Esbenshade (2007) and Singer et al. (2009) who suggested a link between the pace of demographic change and exclusionary policies, as well as Shahani and Greene (2009) who linked participation in the 287(g) program with demographic changes rather than an increase in crime.

Importantly, Model 2 also suggests a relationship between several of the socio-economic characteristics and the nature of the local immigration policy. Owner-occupied housing, education, unemployment, and Republican voting are not statistically significant predictors of a local immigration policy in Model 1. However, they all return p-values of less than 0.1 in Model 2. A larger percentage of owner-occupied housing in an ordinance municipality is associated with the presence of an anti-immigration initiative, whereas higher rates of unemployment and larger college-educated populations are more likely to be found in municipalities with inclusionary policies. Further, the model finds a strong relationship between percent Republican voting and the implementation of an exclusionary rather than a pro-immigration policy. Geographical location also is associated with substantive differences between pro- and

anti-immigration ordinance municipalities. Anti-immigration policies are strongly associated with the location of a municipality in the South (in contrast with the reference category of the West), and suburban municipalities are significantly more likely than central cities to pass exclusionary rather than inclusionary policies. While Model 2 finds no significant differences between cities and rural areas, it is possible that this is due to our decision to drop many rural municipalities from the sample in order to include up-to-date demographic data from the 2005-2007 ACS.

To summarize, the findings of Model 1 confirm the hypotheses that immigrant concentration and rapid growth of a locality's immigrant population increases the likelihood that local governments enact local immigration policies. However, only the variable measuring pace of change is a good predictor for the type of local immigration policy, as revealed in Model 2. Instead, socio-demographic characteristics of the local resident population and the geographic location within the country and within the metropolitan area are better predictors of the presence of either pro- or anti-immigration policies. Model 2 points to an association between education and immigration policy type, suggesting that municipalities with better educated populations are more likely to implement pro-immigration policies. Municipalities in Republican areas, however, are significantly more likely to consider exclusionary policies. Considering the strong links between education and political ideology with the nature of individual attitudes towards immigrants, these findings suggest that

municipalities tend to implement policies consistent with the attitudes of their resident population towards immigrants and immigration<sup>15</sup>.

Further, the findings of Model 2 support the hypothesis of a positive relationship between anti-immigration attitudes and owner-occupied housing. Municipalities that have a high percentage of owner occupied housing are more likely to pass an exclusionary ordinance than municipalities with a high percentage of rental housing. This finding suggests a possible link, as Davis (1990) and Light (2006) have argued, between anti-immigration politics and a general resistance to low-income or rental housing in communities experiencing an influx of immigrants. The findings of Model 2 do not support the economic marginality hypothesis, however. The income variable is not statistically significant, and high unemployment is associated with pro-immigration localities rather than with municipalities that enact exclusionary ordinances. The positive relationship between unemployment and pro-immigration ordinances may be a statistical artefact, due in part to the prominent presence of two types of municipalities in the inclusionary ordinance sample: large central cities with high unemployment, as well as college towns such as Ann Arbor, Michigan that possess not only very high levels

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<sup>15</sup> Tolerance tests for multicollinearity revealed suitable levels of collinearity for all variables; however, we did notice a relatively strong association between education and income. When income (which is not significant in both models) is removed from Model 2, the variable for educational attainment becomes much more significant ( $p = .015$ ). However, we elected to leave the income variable in the model as it relates directly to the economic marginality hypothesis that we sought to test.

of education but also high unemployment and rental housing (given the large student population)<sup>16</sup>.

Finally, our analyses indicate that geographic location within regions of the United States, and within and beyond metropolitan areas has an independent influence on what kinds of policies are being adopted, irrespective of the socio-economic population characteristics of these locales. We find a statistically significant relationship between location in the US South and anti-immigration ordinances. Such a finding is even more striking given our decision to omit counties from our regression analyses, which compose 46 percent of all ordinance localities in the South and which overwhelmingly (96 percent) favor anti-immigration policies to pro-immigration initiatives. This supports Winders' (2007) argument, based on qualitative case studies in the Southern United States, that anti-immigration initiatives in this region are rooted in distinct Southern racialized imaginaries of national belonging. Hoelscher (2003) and others have shown that the South, although not unique, was the main site for struggles over racial injustice and the imaginary of the nation, and has defined and seen itself as a defender of whiteness. Hoelscher (2003, 663) argues that the unacknowledged whiteness of the national imaginary has been more apparent and well defined in the South than in any other American region, suggesting that the region "has become

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<sup>16</sup> We ran a suburbs-only version of Model 2 to further investigate our hypothesis that the finding for unemployment was an artefact of the types of cities in the sample. This model found no significant difference between unemployment rates of inclusive and exclusionary suburbs.

America's "crucible of race," the key site for the ways the ways in which such profound historical-geographical moments are remembered and re-articulated." We suggest that preponderance of anti-immigration ordinances in the South is in part a contemporary extension of this past history and memory; an attempt to defend the unacknowledged whiteness of the national imaginary. However, this does not mean that the legacy of racism and discrimination is restricted to the South.

One of the distinct characteristics emerging from analyzing the geographic distribution of local immigration ordinances is the stark spatial variation in the nature of local immigration policies between central cities, suburbs, and rural areas: The preponderance of pro-immigrant policies in central cities (61 percent) contrasts with that of anti-immigration policies in suburban (76 percent) and rural (over 82 percent) municipalities. The results of the binomial regression analyses suggest that geographic location in central city or suburb has an independent influence on whether a policy is considered or implemented and the type of policy. Thus variations in population characteristics across places do not suffice to account for differences in local immigration policies. As in the case of the South, variations among suburbs can in part be explained by the contrasting imaginaries of place and community. We suggest that some inner ring suburbs have already become more racially diverse and have thus lost white dominance, and house a white population that is more likely to support a multicultural conception of community and nation and to reject exclusionary policies. In



contrast, outer ring suburbs that are sought after by residents attempting to escape problems associated with the racial and cultural diversity of inner cities and inner ring suburbs, and whose residents hold on to a conception of a White America, are more likely to favor ordinances that would keep out immigrants of color.

### *Contrasting Imaginaries of Place and Nation*

In order to examine the role of such imaginaries, we conducted a preliminary textual analysis of ordinance documents and local media reports, using the Baltimore/Washington metropolitan region as a case study<sup>17</sup>. Two contrasting imaginaries of community and place emerged from these texts: An inclusive imaginary that celebrates and values cultural diversity and an open and constantly emerging community, place and nation; and an exclusive imaginary that values and appreciates cultural homogeneity and a clear bounding of place, community and nation. These contrasting imaginaries are associated with disparate understandings of who belongs or does not belong to a particular community and place, which we argue lead to differences in supporting exclusionary or inclusionary local immigration policies.

However, it is important to resist any tendency toward spatial determinism. Indeed, as

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<sup>17</sup> We obtained and analyzed ordinance documentation for localities throughout the Baltimore/Washington metropolitan area. In this preliminary analysis, we refer to two specific policy documents: Prince William County Resolution 07-069, entitled "Immigration- Reaffirm Immigration- Reaffirm County Policy With Respect to Compliance With Federal Law and Issue Directives Incident to Such Reaffirmation to the Prince William County Police Department and the Prince William County Staff," and City of Takoma Park Ordinance 2007-58, "An Ordinance Reaffirming and Strengthening the City of Takoma Park's Immigration Sanctuary Law."

the following example of two suburban communities in the Washington DC metro area shows, there is no straightforward relationship between urban, suburban and rural location and the dominant imaginary of community and place. Takoma Park and Prince William County are both suburban locales in the Washington DC metropolitan area whose residents have argued for the necessity of local immigration ordinances. Both localities use similar language to express their goals in implementing these policies, as evidenced by the following two document excerpts (authors' emphasis):

*Takoma Park: "The Takoma Park Police Department has made it a priority to gain the trust and confidence of the entire community as part of its community policing program . . . Loss of cooperation with the immigrant community threatens **the health, safety, and welfare** of the entire Takoma Park community" (City of Takoma Park, 2007).*

*Prince William County: "The Virginia State Code, Section 15.2-1200 states that any county may adopt such measures as it deems expedient to secure and promote **the health, safety, and general welfare** of its inhabitants which are not inconsistent with the general laws of the Commonwealth" (Prince William County, 2007).*

However, the two localities define very differently those whose welfare, health and safety they seek to protect. The 'sanctuary city' Takoma Park seeks to extend legal protection to all individuals regardless of legal status, defines its community as diverse, and stresses inclusiveness of all persons of all nationalities.

*Takoma Park: "Takoma Park is comprised of racially and ethnically diverse individuals, both native born and immigrants, whose collective cultures, backgrounds, and viewpoints join to form a rich community which prides itself on welcoming persons and families of all backgrounds and nationalities" (City of Takoma Park 2007).*

In contrast, Prince William County positions itself as an exclusive national space where the right to legally reside within the US is similarly salient within the county boundaries.

*Prince William County: The Prince William County Board of County Supervisors has determined that illegal immigration is causing economic hardship and lawlessness in this County and that illegal immigration may be encouraged by public agencies within the County by failing to verify immigration status as a condition of providing public services” (Prince William County 2007).*

These divergent policy languages indicate that two vastly different conceptions of who belongs and has the ‘right’ to be present within a locality are operating within the suburbs of same metropolitan area. Whereas Takoma Park argues that legal status within the United States ought to have no bearing on an individual’s right to reside within its boundaries, Prince William County believes that this distinction is of fundamental importance not just at the national, but also the local scale.

## **Conclusion**

Hundreds of municipalities and counties across the United States have proposed or implemented local immigration policies ranging from “sanctuary” policies to those designed to exclude undocumented immigrants. Our statistical analyses support a number of existing hypotheses, but also provide new insights into potential factors driving local immigration policies. Our findings support Ellis’s (2006) and Wells’ (2004) suggestions that the local politics of immigration is related to the concentration of

immigrants within a locality. However, our analysis shows that the pace of growth in the immigrant population is a better predictor for the nature of the local immigration policy, as municipalities experiencing rapid growth of foreign population are more likely to introduce exclusionary policies. Further, places with better educated populations are less likely to pass exclusionary policies, as are places with high unemployment. In contrast, predominantly Republican areas with a high percentage of owner-occupied housing are more likely to introduce exclusionary policies. This suggests that the socio-demographic characteristics as well the political persuasion of the resident population helps explain the nature of the local immigration policy.

Finally, our analysis shows how geography matters in understanding the variegated landscape of local immigration policies in the US; municipalities in the US South and outer ring suburbs are more likely to introduce exclusionary policies. We suggest that in order to interpret these regional and intra-metropolitan differences, we need to pay attention to the history of social relations in particular places, which in turn help construct and reconstruct certain belief systems, such as race thinking, conceptions of the nation, and place; and that these are more easily uncovered through qualitative analyses. Preliminary textual analysis of select local ordinance documents suggests that underlying contrasting local immigration policies are divergent conceptions of community, nation and place.

We do acknowledge some limitations of the analyses we conducted. In order to accurately measure intra-metropolitan geographic variations and to include the most recent demographic data from the US Census, we had to omit counties and many rural municipalities from our analysis. As such, a follow-up study that incorporates data for small areas from the 2010 Census could capture the substantive demographic changes that occurred in small towns during the period in which many ordinances were proposed. Furthermore, we feel that the models as specified in the quantitative analyses do not fully capture the complexity of factors at work in the creation of the variegated landscape of local immigration policies. For that purpose we are now examining through qualitative case studies the role of locality-specific political activism and power struggles that have accompanied discussions and implementations of local immigration policies.

For example, in Prince William County, a grassroots organization called Help Save Manassas, led by anti-illegal immigration activist and blogger Greg Letiecq, helped organize support amongst residents for immigration restrictions into the area (Miroff, 2007; Singer et al., 2009). Under pressure from residents organized by Help Save Manassas, the Board of County Supervisors unanimously approved Resolution 07-609 granting immigration enforcement authority to local police. Later that year, Prince William passed further restrictions on immigration, in this instance targeting businesses (Singer et al. 2009). The importance of individuals like Greg Letiecq in influencing local

governments to implement immigration policies is something that cannot be captured in a large-scale quantitative analysis, and activists like Letiecq are found across the country in both localities that have implemented pro- or anti-immigration initiatives. This points to the necessity of further research that documents the role of individual actors and local organizations in creating support for, and ultimately influencing the passage of, immigration-related policies at the local level.

The social movements inspired by individuals like Letiecq do not exist in a vacuum, however. Our analysis suggests the importance of Prince William County's social and geographic characteristics in creating a milieu where an anti-immigrant local policy response might emerge: a historically conservative place with a fast-growing immigrant population located both on the fringes of the Washington, DC metropolitan area and on the northern edge of the American South. As such, we argue that the county is precisely the type of place where activists such as Letiecq are able to capture the imagination of the local population regarding their positions on immigration. Accordingly, any analysis of the localization of immigration policy in the US must take into account the importance of the local social, demographic, and geographic context of these policy responses.

## **CHAPTER 3: THE COMPLEX SPATIALITY OF LOCAL IMMIGRATION POLICIES IN THE UNITED STATES**

### **Introduction**

In recent years, hundreds of municipal and county governments in the United States have introduced a variety of ordinances and measures to respond to local issues related to undocumented immigration. These responses vary widely, from exclusionary policies designed to drive away immigrants to inclusionary policies that seek to integrate new immigrant populations. A notable exclusionary example is the Illegal Immigration Relief Act (IIRA) ordinance considered by dozens of municipalities nationwide. Generally speaking, IIRAs penalize landlords who rent to undocumented immigrants, and individuals and companies who employ workers without proper legal status in the United States (Gilbert 2009). Other examples of exclusionary policies include the use of the 287(g) agreement, in which local governments can enter into a partnership with Immigration and Customs Enforcement to train local police officers to detain undocumented immigrants; and “backdoor” policies that target immigrants through “quality of life” ordinances such as overcrowding and day labor restrictions (Coleman 2009; Varsanyi 2008a). Examples of inclusionary policies include “sanctuary” ordinances that prohibit or limit local officials from inquiring into immigration status; or policies that grant local rights to undocumented immigrants, such as voting rights or municipal ID cards (Ridgley 2008; Varsanyi 2006; Hayduk 2006).

A burgeoning literature on local immigration policies has sought to explain and theorize their presence. This includes a large body of work in the legal studies literature, which examines the legal and constitutional grounds for such ordinances (e.g. McKanders 2007; Parlow 2007; Rodriguez 2008; Kobach 2009); quantitative work that examines the relationships between local social and demographic characteristics and local immigration policies (Walker and Leitner 2011; Ramakrishnan and Wong 2010; Hopkins 2010); and theory-driven work in political geography that analyzes how transformations in US immigration policy have facilitated these local responses (Coleman 2007, 2008; Gilbert 2009; Varsanyi 2008a, b; 2011). However, this literature has not yet fully explained the reasons why a relatively small subset of localities has considered local immigration policies. For example, while a neoliberal turn in US federalism has devolved many immigration responsibilities to local governments (Ellis 2006; Varsanyi 2008b); only a small percentage of US localities have actually opted to enact local immigration policies. Further, while Walker and Leitner (2011) found that local immigration policies tend to be found in areas with either large or fast-growing immigrant populations, they were largely quantitatively similar to US localities at large (also see Ramakrishnan and Wong 2010<sup>18</sup>). In turn, Walker and Leitner argue that large-scale quantitative or conceptual studies are limited in the ability to account for the

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<sup>18</sup> In a logistic regression model comparing municipalities that had proposed local immigration policies with a random sample of 'neutral' municipalities, Walker and Leitner (2011) produced a pseudo R-squared statistic of 0.17. In a similar model run by Ramakrishnan and Wong (2010) predicting the presence of an anti-immigration policy against a neutral policy position (with different explanatory variables from Walker and Leitner), their pseudo R-squared was 0.15.



complex dynamics that influence local immigration policies, pointing instead to the need for a detailed examination of the political discourses that surrounded the accompanying policy debates.

In this paper, I draw from a comparative research study of suburban localities in the Washington DC, Phoenix, and Chicago metropolitan areas to explore the complex spatial dynamics of local policy responses to immigration and assess similarities and differences in these processes across space. My approach draws from recent advances in the critical geography literature that theorize the spatiality of political behavior. Leitner et al. (2008) introduce a framework that accounts for the multiple spatial processes that inform and influence social movements. They analyze five spatialities: place, scale, networks, socio-spatial positionality, and mobility. Their principal argument is that none of these spatialities should be privileged above another; rather, they are co-implicated and highly context-dependent. While their focus is on social movements in the paper, this approach is applicable to the analysis of socio-spatial phenomena more broadly (e.g. Sheppard 2002) and has been argued elsewhere by other scholars (Jessop et al. 2008). I employ this approach to contribute some new insights to the geographical literature on local policy and political processes. While in large part the literature on spatial politics in geography has focused on a particular spatiality at a time (e.g. an exclusive focus on scale, or networks) (Leitner et al. 2008), my comparative approach is designed to demonstrate how local policies have been

simultaneously shaped by multiple spatialities. My focus in this paper is on the co-implication of the politics of scale, networking, and place in local immigration policy decisions and debates.

In turn, I argue that any interpretation of these policies as simply “local” in nature is misleading. Locally scaled immigration policies are not simply local responses to local problems, nor are they exclusively the result of the devolution of immigration responsibilities from federal to local levels. Rather, local immigration policies are influenced by a variety of socio-spatial processes, which in many cases are co-implicated with one another. First, in many instances, local immigration policies are constitutive of a *politics of scale*. Localities are using local immigration policies to respond to a federal failure to enact comprehensive immigration reform. Further, the policy positions of local governments are influenced and constrained by the politics of immigration at other scales within which they are embedded. Second, local immigration policies are influenced by a *politics of networking*. In some cases, these policies are mobile, as a “model” locality’s policy travels to and is consequently adopted (or rejected) by other localities. These policy movements may be facilitated by networks of extralocal organizations and actors who intend to use localities as arenas where they can push their own immigration policy agendas. The uneven implementation and reproduction of these policies, however, suggests that local immigration policies also constitute a *politics of place*. While the policies considered by local governments are influenced by forces

operating beyond the locality, they are also heavily reliant on the social characteristics and political identities of the places in which they are debated, implemented and contested.

The remainder of the paper is structured as follows. First, I provide an overview of the existing geographical scholarship on the politics of scale, networking, and place, with attention to how they might influence both local policy and the politics of immigration. Next, I provide examples from qualitative research on immigration policy debates in six suburban localities: three that considered exclusionary policies (Manassas/Prince William County, VA; Carpentersville, IL; and Cave Creek, AZ) and three that considered inclusionary policies (Takoma Park, MD; Evanston, IL; and Chandler, AZ). I use this evidence to illustrate how spatialities such as scale, networks, and place play major roles in the formation of local immigration policies, and are key for understanding the local politics of immigration.

### **Local policy and the politics of scale**

Geographers analyzing the scalar dynamics of politics have emphasized the ways in which scale is politically, socially, and culturally constructed. Delaney and Leitner (1997, 93) point out, “Geographers have shown that the geographic scale at which, for example, economic activities and political authority are constituted, is not fixed but periodically transformed.” They follow that these geographers conceptualize scale as

“socially constructed rather than ontologically pre-given, and that the geographic scales constructed are themselves implicated in the constitution of social, economic, and political processes.” As such, this theoretical stance asserts that actors engaged in politics are not confined to the scales at which they are situated (i.e., a city council dealing exclusively with city matters). Instead, political actors may transcend scales, which in turn ought not to be taken for granted as fixed political planes, but instead are best interpreted as social constructions.

Cox (1998) outlines a framework for using this perspective on scale to analyze local politics. He argues that localities are not exclusively engaged with local politics, and can instead “jump scales” at times to engage with issues beyond the scale of the locality. Cox uses two interrelated concepts to facilitate the analysis of this local politics of scale: *spaces of dependence* and *spaces of engagement*. A space of dependence is “defined by those more-or-less localized social relations upon which we depend for the realization of essential interests and for which there are no substitutes elsewhere; they define place-specific conditions for our material well-being and our sense of significance” (Cox 1998, 2). As such, a space of dependence can refer to the material form in which politics takes place; this may be a concrete social arena (i.e., a locality) but it also may take on other spatial forms, such as a network. A space of engagement, however, is a space in which a local interest may insert itself politically in order to advance a particular agenda, which may operate at a different scale than the locality.

The scholarship on the politics of scale provides numerous examples of how this operates in practice in regards to local politics. Kurtz (2003) uses the concept of “scale frames” to analyze the ways in which activists in St. James Parish, Louisiana contested the construction of an environmentally harmful production facility. While the problem was experienced locally, activists framed their grievances at the level of the state government. Other examples include Miller (1994; 1997) who demonstrates how local anti-nuclear and peace activists in the Massachusetts cities of Cambridge, Lexington, and Waltham engaged with Cold War geopolitical debates, challenging the position of the US national government; and McCann’s (2003) study of how Austin, Texas framed its smart growth plan in a way that responded simultaneously to potentially conflicting agendas at local and state levels. This politics of scale, however, can operate in multiple directions. In a critique of Cox’s (1998) contributions on the politics of scale, Smith (1998) suggests, “What takes place at the local level may not be local politics at all but the localization of wider political games involving regional, national, or global actors who have found local venues to mine and local actors to express their interests” (Smith 1998, 40). In turn, while local actors may frame their political struggle at a larger scale to gain political legitimacy, extralocal scalar actors might also use localities as arenas in which a particular policy agenda can be practiced.

Ellis (2006, 51) claims that the politics of scale is intrinsic to the local politics of immigration. He writes, “Embedded within US immigration disputes is a politics of scale,

with both supporters and opponents of immigration framing their claims about economic and cultural impacts at different geographies.” Part of the reason for the scalar dimensions of the local politics of immigration, writes Ellis, is a “scalar tension” that has emerged in US immigration federalism. Generally speaking, while the US federal government has remained responsible for the entry and exit of migrants, it has “downloaded” many of the social responsibilities for integrating immigrants to state and local governments. In turn, local politicians and residents who feel unduly burdened by integration costs may respond unfavorably to the presence of immigrants. While a substantial literature in geography (e.g. Leitner et al. 2007) has examined progressive contestations to neoliberalism, which would include inclusive immigration policies, Varsanyi (2011) argues that these responses can be reactionary and exclusionary as well, like the IIRAs passed in Hazleton and other US localities.

### **Policy mobility and the politics of networking**

A growing literature in geography has given attention to the role of networking in political processes as an alternative to scalar politics. As Leitner et al. (2008, 160) write: “The spatiality of contested politics often connects people and places directly, horizontally across space.” Rather than conceiving of spatial politics as top-down and hierarchical, a network approach emphasizes topological spatial relationships that connect previously unrelated actors. Further, network boundaries are not pre-given or

territorially bounded; rather they are fluid and constantly changing (Leitner and Sheppard 2002). In terms of local immigration policy, then, a network approach might suggest that local policies are not simply responses to a scalar tension between federal and local governments, but might instead be influenced by networks of political actors across space.

Scholarship on “policy transfer” has examined the ways in which policies travel from one location to another, and the role of networks in facilitating these transfers (Peck and Theodore 2001). Some recent interventions in geography have emphasized instead a “mobility” approach to the analysis of policy movement (McCann 2010). Peck and Theodore (2010, 170) explain: “In this context, policies are not simply transiting intact between jurisdictions, but evolve through mobility, while at the same time (re)making relational connections between policymaking sites.” As such, the dynamics of the networks that facilitate policy mobility are not pre-given, but are in part shaped by the characteristics of the policies themselves.

In many cases, mobile policies emanate from a policy model; that is, a locality whose policy response exemplifies a paradigm for other localities that wish to replicate its results. McCann (2010) provides the example of Vancouver, BC, whose reputation as an archetype of urban sustainability has attracted the attention of a variety of other cities seeking to implement similar sustainability programs. Other examples, according to McCann and Ward (2010), include Barcelona and Manchester for urban revitalization,

and Portland, OR for metropolitan growth management and planning. Policies then move between localities through the efforts of a variety of social actors and networks, including policy professionals, consultants, and political activists (McCann 2010).

In terms of local immigration policy, the best example of a “model” policy is the Illegal Immigration Relief Act ordinance passed by Hazleton, PA in 2006. While Hazleton’s policy was actually modeled on an unsuccessful proposal in San Bernardino, CA, it has since become the paradigmatic example for other localities that have sought to enact similar ordinances (Gilbert 2009; Varsanyi 2011). Dozens of other localities considered IIRAs modeled after Hazleton’s ordinance; these localities included several small towns near Hazleton in eastern Pennsylvania, as well as seemingly unrelated municipalities nationwide, including Carpentersville, IL, one of the communities in this study (Gilbert 2009; Varsanyi 2011; Walker and Leitner 2011). IIRAs in many instances were supported by networks of local activists, such as Minutemen organizations, and national influences like the anti-immigration Federation for American Immigration Reform (FAIR) based in Washington, DC (Gilbert 2009).

### **Local policy as a politics of place**

While a scale or network approach emphasizes the role of extralocal influences in shaping the dynamics of local politics, local policies cannot be considered as independent from the places in which they are debated. Places are more than simply



sites in which policies are considered and take effect; rather, places actively shape the dynamics and characteristics of policy debates, and ultimately the policies themselves (e.g. Agnew 1987). These place-based influences might consist of socio-demographic characteristics of the local population, or physical attributes such as built form, which might constrain or enable certain social interactions from taking place. However, they also include the social and symbolic meaning of places (Leitner et al 2008; Massey 2005).

A number of recent quantitative studies have demonstrated the importance of local place-based characteristics to the local politics of immigration. Some of these studies have used multi-level regression modeling to study how contextual social and demographic variables in a particular place influence attitudes towards immigrants and immigration policy (Ha 2010; Hjerm 2009; Rustenbach 2010). A small number of recent studies have employed regression analysis to directly analyze the factors that influence local governments to implement immigration ordinances. Ramakrishnan and Wong (2010) find that local context is important in explaining ordinance implementation, particularly in terms of political ideology as localities in more Republican areas are more likely to consider exclusionary policies. A similar analysis conducted by Hopkins (2010) reveals a relationship between anti-immigration ordinances and a rapidly growing local immigrant population. Finally, a study by Walker and Leitner (2011) reveals that the decisions of localities to consider any sort of immigration policy (inclusive or

exclusionary) are strongly influenced by the size of the local immigrant population.

Further, exclusionary as opposed to inclusive immigration policies tend to be found in municipalities with a fast-growing foreign-born population, lower levels of education, and higher levels of Republican voting; in suburbs rather than central cities; and in the US South.

Walker and Leitner (2011) also suggest an incompleteness in such quantitative studies, as they do not account for how local conceptions of race, place, and nation manifest themselves in local immigration policy responses. The importance of place identity to local immigration policy movements is exemplified by Winders' (2007) study of anti-immigration politics in the US South. She writes that contemporary agitations around immigration in many Southern communities frequently draw on discourses concerning the historical geography of racial politics in the South, and the defense of a Southern "way of life." For example, Winders references how anti-illegal immigration movements in Tennessee and Mississippi raised concerns about immigrants as carriers of disease, which resemble the same discourses that targeted Southern blacks after the Civil War. Similarly, Leitner (2011) demonstrates the importance of place identity to the responses of rural residents of the Upper Midwest to new immigrants. She finds that the racialization of immigrants and expressions of racism are in part rooted in residents' attachments to a historical ideal of the rural as a white, homogenous place. In terms of inclusive responses, Ridgley (2008) discusses how San Francisco's immigrant

sanctuary policy draws in part upon the identity of the city as a place that believes that the human rights of all individuals who reside there should be respected. To explore the complex spatial politics of the local immigration debate in the US I draw on the experiences of six suburban localities that considered and/or implemented local immigration policies between 2005 and 2008.

### **Description of methodology and case studies**

I conducted research for this study between 2008 and 2010. For purposes of comparison, I selected three US metropolitan areas, Chicago, Phoenix, and Washington DC, for the following reasons. First, each metropolitan area is representative of a different immigrant “gateway” type as defined by Singer (2004): Chicago is a “continuous” immigrant gateway; Washington is an “emerging” gateway; and Phoenix is a “re-emerging” gateway<sup>19</sup>. Second, each metropolitan area is representative of the emerging variegated landscape of local immigration policy responses, as localities in these metros have proposed or implemented both inclusive and exclusionary policies. Third, the suburban foreign-born population increased rapidly in each metropolitan area in the period preceding the introduction of these policies<sup>20</sup>.

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<sup>19</sup> A “continuous” gateway refers to a metropolitan area where immigration levels have historically been and continue to be high. An “emerging” gateway is a metropolitan area where the immigrant population has grown substantially since 1980. In “re-emerging” immigrant gateways, immigration levels were once high, leveled off in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, and increased rapidly again since 1980.

<sup>20</sup> Between 1980 and 2000, the suburban foreign-born population grew 156 percent in Chicago; 256 percent in Washington; and 340 percent in Phoenix (Singer 2004).

Within each metropolitan area, I selected two suburbs for detailed study: one *inclusive* suburb, and another *exclusionary* suburb. I chose to focus on the suburban politics of immigration rather than central cities for the following reasons. First, I felt that suburban case studies would provide a unique window into the local politics of immigration, as the jurisdictional fragmentation of US suburbanization creates smaller communities where residents may be more likely to engage in local politics, and given the intensity with which suburban politics often addresses local quality of life issues (Oliver and Ha 2007; Purcell 2001). Second, suburbs are increasingly emerging as the preferred destination for many new immigrants (Hardwick 2008). Third, while a substantial literature has focused on the integration experiences of immigrants in large cities, there is a need for more research on this topic in non-traditional, suburban destinations. The suburbs I selected for detailed study are the following six localities:

- *Takoma Park, Maryland* is a small suburb of Washington, DC that borders the city to the north. Takoma Park is well-known for its demographic diversity; in 2010, the city was 43 percent non-Hispanic white, 34 percent non-Hispanic black, and 14 percent Hispanic. In 1985, Takoma Park was one of the first cities to pass a “sanctuary” ordinance designed to protect refugees from El Salvador and Guatemala who could not obtain official refugee status from the US government. In 1991, Takoma Park continued its tradition of inclusive immigration policy activism by becoming one of only a few localities nationwide

to grant local suffrage rights to noncitizens. In 2007, Takoma Park updated and strengthened its sanctuary law, barring cooperation with ICE and inquiries into residents' citizenship under most circumstances.

- *Manassas, Virginia* is an outer suburb of Washington approximately one hour west of the District. The foreign-born population in Manassas grew approximately 70 percent during the 2000s. In late 2005 in response to complaints of residential overcrowding in the city, Manassas passed an ordinance adopting a restrictive definition of "family" in city code, which city officials designed to target undocumented immigrants (McCrummen 2005). While the city was later sued and the ordinance overturned, the grassroots organization Help Save Manassas began mobilizing to take the immigration debate to the board of Prince William County, which surrounds Manassas and has substantial integration with the city. In 2007, the County passed a resolution directing police to inquire into the immigration status of detainees they suspected of residing in the United States illegally; this was later changed to require status checks of all arrestees. To maintain consistency with the County, Manassas adopted this as city policy in 2008; further, both jurisdictions participate in the 287(g) program.
- *Evanston, Illinois* is an inner suburb of north of Chicago; the city was 13 percent foreign-born in 2009. Like Takoma Park, Evanston passed a Central American

refugee sanctuary resolution in 1988. In late 2007, Evanston activists with the support of Alderman Edmund Moran authored a sanctuary policy based on that of Chicago, which is very similar to that of Takoma Park. While Alderman Moran's efforts to pass the sanctuary policy did not succeed, Evanston did pass a pro-immigration resolution calling for comprehensive immigration reform. Further, the police department issued a general order adopting the recommendations of the sanctuary policy as departmental policy.

- *Carpentersville, Illinois* is located in outer-suburban Kane County, approximately one hour northwest of downtown Chicago. In 1980, Carpentersville was approximately 10 percent foreign-born; according to the most recent (2007-2009 ACS) estimates, this figure is now 32 percent. In 2006, village Trustee Paul Humpfer introduced an Illegal Immigration Relief Act ordinance based on the policy passed in Hazleton, PA. The ordinance caused considerable controversy in the village, and over 3000 people converged on Village Hall to argue in favor of or against the policy. Unable to find a suitable venue to accommodate all the attendees (and required by village charter to do so), Carpentersville trustees tabled the ordinance and have yet to revisit it. However, the village board did pass a resolution declaring English as its official language, and another resolution requesting stricter immigration enforcement by the federal government.

- *Chandler, Arizona* is a large suburb southwest of Phoenix; at one point during the 1990s it was the fastest-growing city in the United States. In 1997, with assistance from agents from the Immigration and Naturalization Service (now ICE) and the Border Patrol, Chandler police engaged in a five-day immigration enforcement operation colloquially known as the “Chandler Roundup.” While the intent of this operation was to detain undocumented immigrants, many American citizens and legal US residents were targeted and detained in large part based on their appearance (Romero 2006). Since 1997, Chandler has made efforts to repair the damaged relationships with its Latino community. In 1999, the city passed a policy (adopted by the police department as a general order) directing local police not to engage in immigration enforcement under most circumstances. However, in advance of the state-level immigration enforcement bill SB 1070 enacted in Arizona in 2010, Chandler rescinded its policy in February of that year.
- *Cave Creek, Arizona* is a small town that borders Phoenix to the north. In the mid-2000s, immigrant day laborers began to congregate in the town to find work in the fast-growing area’s burgeoning construction and landscaping industries. The presence of these laborers led to considerable controversy in the town, and ultimately prompted the town council to pass two ordinances designed to limit the ability of day laborers to seek work. The town was eventually sued on behalf

of several laborers by the ACLU, and a judge permanently blocked the ordinances.

I employed several complementary qualitative methodologies to study these policies. First, I collected publicly available archival data including media coverage of these policy debates; city council minutes; archived video of city council meetings; and other materials such as activist newsletters. I then conducted site visits to each of these communities in 2009. While in the field, I conducted interviews in each suburb with key informants including mayors and city council members; local law enforcement; leaders of the local immigrant community; and pro- and anti-immigration activists. These interviews were recorded and transcribed. I also visited each respective city hall to collect official policy documentation and city materials related to these policies, and toured each community. While these sources individually represent incomplete or subjective perspectives on the dynamics underpinning these policy debates, I employ the sources in complementary ways to produce a fuller account of the factors influencing these local immigration policies.

### **Local immigration policies and the politics of scale**

In the three communities that considered exclusionary immigration policies – Manassas, Carpentersville, and Cave Creek – local officials originally proposed the policies to address specific local concerns. Manassas passed an ordinance in 2005



adopting a highly restrictive definition of “family” in city code, in an effort to combat residential overcrowding. Cave Creek passed anti-solicitation and anti-loitering ordinances to limit the presence of day laborers who were congregating along Cave Creek Road, the town’s sidewalk-free main commercial strip. Finally, village trustee Paul Humpfer introduced Carpentersville’s IIRA ordinance in a meeting of the village’s Audit and Finance Commission as a response to a growing number of unpaid ambulance bills in the village. However, the debates around these policies reveal the ways in which these localities framed their policies firmly within the national immigration debate.

As part of the debates around these local immigration policies, each of the three localities authored a letter or resolution stating that a *federal* failure to adequately enforce immigration laws has negatively impacted their local communities. The Carpentersville resolution, passed unanimously in November 2006, reads in part:

WHEREAS, illegal immigration has an adverse impact on the social and economic well-being of Carpentersville, Illinois, the United States of America and its citizens; and WHEREAS, the adverse impact of illegal immigration places a drain on the fiscal resources of all levels of government, our educational system, public safety services, health care providers, non-profit agencies, and charitable institutions; and WHEREAS, the matter of illegal immigration has become an increasingly divisive social and legal issue throughout our village and country. . .

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the President and Board of Trustees of the Village of Carpentersville, Kane County, Illinois, as follows: The President, House of Representatives, and Senate of the United States of America are hereby requested to immediately take such actions as are necessary to effect meaningful and practical immigration reform and to provide the resources necessary to effect enforcement of immigration laws. (Carpentersville Resolution No. R06-158).

In this resolution, Carpentersville expresses a strong belief that the presence of illegal immigrants in the village is producing a wide variety of negative consequences, including economic strains on village resources as well as growing social discord within the community. To resolve these issues, however, Carpentersville demands federal immigration reform. As such, this resolution implies that the tensions experienced in Carpentersville are in part the fault of the federal government. In turn, Carpentersville trustees additionally elected to take *local* action towards immigration, exemplified by the proposed IIRA ordinance. The proposed Carpentersville ordinance reads in part:

The state and federal government lack the resources to properly protect the citizens of the Village of Carpentersville from the adverse effects of unauthorized employment, harboring of illegal aliens, and criminal activity by illegal aliens.

The Village finds that it is in the best interests of and will serve and benefit the health, safety, and welfare of the public and law-abiding business entities and property owners to adopt policies and procedures to deter and prevent unauthorized employment, harboring of illegal aliens, and criminal activity by illegal aliens (Unadopted Carpentersville IIRA ordinance).

As demonstrated by this policy language, the Carpentersville trustees who favored a restrictive stance towards undocumented immigration engaged in a multi-scalar spatial strategy to advance their immigration policy agenda. On the one hand, they demanded federal reforms to help alleviate their local problems in the resolution, and situated their local experiences within the national politics of immigration. However, as the text of the proposed IIRA ordinance indicates, trustees recognized that the federal government may be incapable of solving Carpentersville's problems. In turn,

these trustees additionally desired to engage the issue at the *local* level and adopt ‘policies and procedures’ targeting undocumented immigrants.

This type of multi-scalar strategy was similarly pursued in Cave Creek and Manassas. Cave Creek passed a resolution in 2007 that contained very similar language to that of Carpentersville, demanding that the federal government “appropriate all funds necessary to fully enforce the immigration laws. . .and secure the borders of the United States of America” (Cave Creek Resolution No. R2007-23). Similarly, in 2005 Manassas authored a letter to then-Virginia Gov. Mark Warner requesting federal and state enforcement of immigration laws. Their justification, in part, is as follows: “It is the city’s belief that a significant contributor to this increased demand on public services and the resulting overcrowding is the result of the presence of large numbers of undocumented or illegal aliens.” As such, these three communities framed their immigration-related local issues as simultaneously local as well as federal concerns, and sought both federal and locally-scaled solutions.

The politics of scale, however, is not limited to localities who desire stricter immigration enforcement. In 1985, Takoma Park passed a resolution declaring the city a sanctuary for Salvadoran and Guatemalan refugees; in 1988, Evanston followed suit. Both resolutions include a long list of reasons detailing why each city feels that United States policy toward migrants from El Salvador and Guatemala is unjustly restrictive; further, each resolution is framed primarily as a direct response to the federal

government, with local quality of life concerns secondary (City of Takoma Park 1985; City of Evanston 1988). The more recent immigration policy debates in these cities were framed in similar ways.

In early 2008, the Evanston City Council considered an updated sanctuary resolution that would direct city law enforcement and public officials to not inquire into the immigration status of individuals present in Evanston. While the tangible impacts of this policy would ostensibly be felt in the city of Evanston, the resolution was framed as a direct critique of the federal government's treatment of undocumented immigrants.

The resolution reads, in part:

WHEREAS, international political conflicts and the emergence of brutal dictatorial regimes in many regions of the world have induced many to escape to the United States in search of refuge and political asylum; and. . . WHEREAS, it is unreasonable, irrational and impractical for the United States government to invest the tremendous amount of resources that it would take to deport over 12 million human beings because of their lack of documentation; and WHEREAS, nonetheless, the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) division of the Department of Homeland Security continues to round up and deport not-yet-documented immigrants, creating family disintegration and an atmosphere of fear; and WHEREAS, an increasingly hostile anti-immigrant and racist atmosphere is being promoted by a vocal minority that represents neither American values nor the values of the majority of our citizenry, exacerbating this atmosphere of fear in which many immigrants live. . . (City of Evanston 2008).

This policy language serves as a strong rebuke of federal immigration policy, just as Carpentersville, Cave Creek, and Manassas also stated in their resolutions. The critique, however, is the complete opposite of the aforementioned localities. Instead, the text demonstrates a distinct local awareness of the geopolitical conditions that have led

migrants to come to the United States, and a strong statement condemning Immigration and Customs Enforcement for improper practices regarding the enforcement of immigration policy. As in the exclusionary localities, however, the Evanston policy includes both a statement directed at the federal government (albeit in this case promoting *inclusive* federal immigration reform) and a local policy component, in this instance a sanctuary policy. While the sanctuary resolution failed to pass in Evanston, the city council did pass a resolution calling for comprehensive immigration reform that included the above language.

The aforementioned examples demonstrate the ways in which local governments have engaged in a politics of scale. While the localities have used locally-scaled immigration policies to address specific concerns about immigration, they have framed their struggles within the context of a federal immigration policy that has failed them; either by being too lax (such as in Carpentersville) or too strict (as in Evanston). In fact, as the town manager of Cave Creek told me, the ordinances passed there were largely used to gain the attention of political actors at larger scales:

We didn't have any violations to enforce. The ordinances, they were not needed. The ordinances by themselves, they were just a message sent to the political establishment, state and federal political establishment from small communities about the immigration issue. But there was no need for these ordinances for safety or for other reasons.

In his opinion, the ordinances passed in Cave Creek did not serve any practical purpose; in fact, these ordinances were never enforced. Instead, he told me, they were used to

get the attention of actors at state and federal levels, and potentially send them a message to take action on the immigration issue. Interestingly, this was precisely what happened in Cave Creek, suggesting that the politics of scale in the local immigration debate can operate in multiple directions.

Cave Creek's debates around day labor policy attracted outside participants including Maricopa County Sheriff Joe Arpaio, who is well-known for his strict (and abusive, according to critics) local immigration enforcement campaign; and Arizona State Rep. Russell Pearce (R-Mesa), who has authored a number of anti-illegal immigration policy proposals at the state level. At the June 18, 2007 town council meeting, Rep. Pearce made the following comment as part of the discussion on day labor in Cave Creek (paraphrased in city council minutes):

This is not a local issue; it is an issue that affects all of America. There are 84 cities that are in the process of doing something about the illegal alien invasion. Thirty-four states are in the process of passing legislation to deal with this issue and [I refuse] to stand by and watch this irresponsibility.

Sheriff Arpaio made comments to a similar effect at the September 24, 2007 town council meeting, when the council voted on the day labor ordinances (paraphrased in city council minutes):

Sheriff Joe Arpaio stated that this personifies what America is all about. You have your own destiny, you make your own ordinances, and he thanked Council for this ordinance that revises the traffic ordinance. You are being pro-active and he thanked Council for having confidence in the law officers. He spoke of a few problems that are county-wide and felt this ordinance would help to solve some of them. We have an illegal immigration problem in the county and in the town.

Both the comments made by Rep. Pearce and Sheriff Arpaio demonstrate how they view Cave Creek's actions as part and parcel of a broader agenda that they champion. Rep. Pearce spoke of his desire to combat illegal immigration at the state level, and situated Cave Creek's actions within this context. Similarly, Sheriff Arpaio references the county scale—the scale for which he is personally responsible—and mentions how he views the local responses in Cave Creek as part of his county-wide enforcement agenda. On a basic level, Cave Creek's policies were designed to address a specific local problem – the congregation of day laborers along Cave Creek Road. However, Sheriff Arpaio and Rep. Pearce – both of whom represent scales of governance that have concurrent jurisdiction in Cave Creek – attempted to use Cave Creek's policy as an example of how immigration policies at larger scales are insufficiently weak, and in turn to strengthen the legitimacy of their own immigration policy agendas at the county and state scales.

Elsewhere in the Phoenix metropolitan area, the immigration policy responses of Chandler have similarly been shaped by the introduction of state laws that influence the conditions of possibility for local policies. In April 2010, Arizona Gov. Jan Brewer signed Senate Bill 1070 into law. SB 1070, authored by Rep. Russell Pearce, is an omnibus immigration bill that is best known for directing local police to inquire into the immigration status of individuals when they have “reasonable suspicion” that the person is undocumented. However, the bill also includes a variety of other stipulations, including its directive that: “Officials or agencies of this state and counties, cities, towns,

and other political subdivisions of this state may not be prohibited or in any way restricted from sending, receiving, or maintaining information related to the immigration status of an individual or exchanging that information with any other federal, state, or local government entity.” In sum, SB 1070 prevents Arizona localities from implementing any sort of policy resembling a sanctuary ordinance. In part, this directive targeted Chandler, which had such a policy in place from 1999 to early 2010.

After the Roundup, Chandler moved quickly to repair the damage to its reputation and its relationships with the local Latino community. It established a Human Relations Commission to address diversity issues within the community, and now hosts a variety of events celebrating multiculturalism; local officials and Latino activists in Chandler told me that these overtures have had tangible positive effects in healing the wounds from the Roundup. Importantly, as part of the settlement agreement from the lawsuit, Chandler implemented a directive in 1999 that would prevent local police from inquiring into the immigration status of detained individuals under most circumstances. Chandler Police Department General Order E-17 reads:

Officers may provide security for immigration officers but shall not do any of the following: A) Stop, detain, or interrogate persons for the purpose of determining immigration status; B) Arrest a person when the only violation is an infraction of a federal immigration law; C) Contact INS/Border Patrol for the sole purpose of interpreting. INS may be contacted in order to attempt to obtain lawful temporary status; D)Transport INS prisoners, except in life-threatening situations.



Further, CPD could only inquire into immigration status of individuals who were detained for major crimes (e.g. felonies, or misdemeanors such as assault). The purpose of Chandler's policy was to draw a clear line between the responsibilities of the Chandler Police Department and federal immigration police; and to ensure that the events of the 1997 Roundup would not be repeated.

After the policy was implemented in 1999, however, actions taken by political actors at state and county scales made Chandler's political position regarding immigration tenuous. While the Chandler Police would not themselves engage in immigration policing, Maricopa County Sheriff Joe Arpaio, who has concurrent jurisdiction in Chandler, has had no reservations about engaging in these types of actions. As Chandler officials told me, these types of raids bring up memories of the Roundup in the community and threaten the trust that the city has built up between its institutions and the local Latino and immigrant populations. Chandler's policy position has also been unpopular among lawmakers at the state level, particularly Rep. Russell Pearce. Pearce has referred to Chandler as the "complete sanctuary city," citing it as the impetus for introducing state policy to compel localities to engage in immigration enforcement (Fischer 2006). In 2006, Pearce introduced a bill which would deny state aid to cities that have similar non-cooperation policies in place; in 2009, two other Arizona state representatives sponsored a bill that would prohibit cities from enacting these sorts of policies (Benson 2009).

Ultimately, Chandler decided to rescind its open immigration policy in February 2010, allowing the police department more latitude to engage in immigration policing. Interestingly, part of the impetus for rescinding the policy was the pressure put on Chandler by political actors operating at larger geographic scales. Mayor Boyd Dunn alludes to this in a memo to the Chandler City Council requesting a repeal of its immigration policy:

Because there have been significant developments in immigration law, policies, and procedures, both locally and nationally over the past decade, withdrawal of this policy will allow [Chandler Police] to adjust its General Orders accordingly . . . [Chandler Police] will have the ability to make any new modifications in the future as Arizona laws change.

The decision to repeal this policy, however, was not simply made in anticipation of SB 1070. In further commentary from the city council meeting during which the policy was rescinded, Mayor Dunn suggested that Chandler's decision was also due to the reputation the city had gained amongst state lawmakers as an exemplar of lax local immigration enforcement:

[Mayor Dunn] spoke about various bills going through the legislature that correspond to the immigration policy [in Chandler]. He said he often hears arguments about having to enhance the State law that deals with immigration because of the policy that has been in place in the City of Chandler.

As such, the reasons for rescinding the policy in Chandler were twofold. First, the Mayor was responding to the negative attention and pressure put on Chandler from state-level lawmakers regarding its immigration policy, as detailed above. Second, this decision was a preemptive response to SB 1070 in Arizona, which would have required

Chandler to overturn its policy and engage in immigration policing anyway. In fact, Dunn's testimony suggests that the movement to pass SB 1070 in Arizona was in part inspired by Chandler's actions. As such, while Chandler originally enacted its policy as a response to a specific local issue (albeit influenced by federal actors), its ability to maintain this policy was heavily influenced by immigration policy activism at the state level.

These examples demonstrate how the politics of scale can operate in multiple directions, with both local governments considering local immigration policies while framing their struggles within the national immigration debate, and state and regional actors influencing local policy. These policies, however, are not simply influenced by political actors associated with overlapping tiers of government. In addition to this scalar politics, regional and national organizations have mobilized networks of activists and local governments to push their immigration policy agendas through local immigration ordinances. In many instances, this politics of networking has played a pivotal role in the introduction of local immigration policies.

### **Extralocal (activist) networks and immigration policy mobility**

Mark Krikorian, executive director of the Washington-based think tank Center for Immigration Studies, the policy wing of FAIR, has proposed a strategy of "attrition through enforcement" as a way to deal with undocumented immigration. This

immigration policing strategy, he argues, includes a significant local component. He writes,

Such a strategy would have two parts: conventional enforcement at the border and the interior to apprehend and remove illegals, plus what might be called a “firewall” policy, which seeks to prevent illegals from being able to embed themselves in our society. That would involve denying them access to jobs, identification, housing, and in general making it as difficult as possible for an illegal immigrant to live a normal life here, so as to persuade a large number of them to give up and self-deport (Krikorian 2006).

Krikorian’s “firewall” policy appears strikingly similar to some of the policies considered in places like Carpentersville, Manassas, and Cave Creek. Carpentersville’s proposed IIRA ordinance would have restricted the ability of undocumented immigrants to find housing and seek work, and Manassas and Cave Creek passed ordinances with similar intent. Ultimately, these policies were championed by local actors such as the local city councils. However, the force behind these policies in some cases did not come from within the localities themselves, but from outside actors like FAIR who viewed these local policies as avenues to pursue precisely the sort of agenda advocated by Krikorian.

The city officials and activists I spoke with in Carpentersville suggested that the village trustees who proposed the IIRA ordinance, and the village’s lawyers, had contact with the Federation for American Immigration Reform. Incidentally, FAIR supported the IIRA ordinance considered in Hazleton, Pennsylvania; further, the immigration ordinance originally introduced by Carpentersville Trustee Paul Humpfer is a near-verbatim copy of Hazleton’s approved ordinance. In fact, Carpentersville served as a node in a network of

localities considering IIRAs with very similar policy language. At a town hall meeting on immigration in Carpentersville, Trustee Humpfer made the following statement:

We want our village to follow the lead of Hazleton Pennsylvania, Escondido California, Riverside New Jersey, Valley Park Missouri, West Hazleton Pennsylvania, and most recently Farmers Branch Texas, as well as the numerous other towns and cities across the country considering Illegal Immigration Relief Ordinances (Ast 2007).

In this statement, the influences Humpfer cites are not associated with any jurisdictions that Carpentersville is “nested within,” as might be suggested by a politics of scale approach; rather, these influences are distant localities with no apparent connection to the small village in the Chicago suburbs.

FAIR had similar influence in Prince William County/Manassas’s immigration policy responses. Some contacts in Virginia suggested that FAIR had a role in writing the immigration resolution in Prince William County; this was confirmed in a recent documentary on the topic, *9500 Liberty*. In an interview with *9500 Liberty* filmmakers, Immigration Reform Law Institute (the legal wing of FAIR) lawyer Michael Hethmon made the following comments about his organization’s role in advising local activist organizations like the influential Help Save Manassas in Manassas/Prince William County, and in turn crafting policy “models,” much like the one from Hazleton:

Hethmon: Help Save Manassas called us up and said you know, we’ve heard about all these problems in other states and we want to do something, so we said here’s what we suggest. . . . A little bit here in Prince William County, a little bit here in Oklahoma, a little bit here in California... In one sense we’re coming up with models, what works here will hopefully guide the federal government.

Interviewer: So this is a laboratory, right here [in Manassas/Prince William County]?

Hethmon: I like to say that, I mean I didn't set it up, or maybe it's a field study, I don't know what scientific metaphor you want to use. So yes, there's that sense. And it also speeds up the time when the federal government will take action (Byler and Park 2010).

FAIR was not the only extralocal organization involved in these local immigration policy debates, however. The political controversy around day labor in Cave Creek, Arizona exemplifies the ways in which extralocal activist organizations have attempted to influence local governments to enact immigration-related policies. In Cave Creek, the Episcopalian church Good Shepherd of the Hills started a day labor center out of its parking lot as a way to both move day laborers off Cave Creek Road, the town's main commercial strip, and to facilitate employment for the laborers. The day labor site was targeted by an Arizona-based motorcycle gang called the American Freedom Riders, whose mission statement is "To combine the passion of riding the open roads with the urgent need to inform politicians at all levels that we will no longer stand by while the integrity and sovereignty of our nation is compromised by the adverse social and economic effects of illegal immigration" (CAII 2006). The Freedom Riders would ride, armed, through the day labor center in order to intimidate the workers. Ultimately, the town council decided to move forward with their day labor ordinances in part as measures to ease the rising tension in the town.

As in Cave Creek, outside actors were a driving force in influencing local officials to propose exclusionary policies in Carpentersville. Both city officials and immigration advocates in the village felt that the immigration debate was largely being driven by people from outside their community. When I asked Rev. Antonio Cabello of the predominantly Hispanic Iglesia de San Esteban Martir in Carpentersville about whether the village had a history of inter-ethnic tension, he responded:

There is none. You need to understand something. The issues were brought by people in the council of Carpentersville who were animated and pushed by people who were outside of our community. There were people coming from Harvard (Illinois). There were people who have very strong feelings about this from another community who came to push the issue here. I don't think that the people in the council... they were just looking for votes. They were looking for scapegoats, and they found one. That is how I see it. The whole process, I think, was a little bit hijacked by people from the outside.

The people from Harvard, Illinois referenced by Rev. Cabello included the Illinois State Director of the Federal Immigration Reform and Enforcement (FIRE) Coalition. This organization includes a network of activists mobilizing in communities across the United States, and whose 'vision' and 'mission' statements read:

The FIRE Coalition vision is to end the invasion of illegal aliens into the United States. In order to achieve our vision, FIRE Coalition will educate American citizens about the duties and obligations of the federal, state, and local governments as well as the obligations of private and corporate citizens, and to advocate the enforcement of federal, state, and local laws.  
(<http://www.firecoalition.com/index.asp>).

In turn, Reverend Cabello told me, these activists who had no personal stake in the Carpentersville viewed the local debate as an opportunity to mobilize their own immigration agenda.

The influence of FAIR and other extralocal organizations is not limited to localities considering exclusionary policies, however. When Takoma Park was considering its initiative to allow noncitizen voting, FAIR organized a campaign urging its members to contact their congressional representatives in opposition of the resolution. Further, FAIR field representative Rosanna Pulido voiced opposition to Evanston's sanctuary proposal during several city council meetings, as did an activist from the FIRE Coalition, the same organization that mobilized in Carpentersville (Hayduk 2006; City of Evanston 2008). In fact, Evanston's proposed sanctuary policy was also in part prompted by the 'model' policy passed in Hazleton and later considered in Carpentersville. However, in this instance, the model policy was not adopted, but rather influenced a policy response designed to express Evanston's opposition to IIRA ordinances. Evanston activist Rachel Heuman, one of the architects of the proposed sanctuary policy, said the following at a meeting of the Evanston Human Services Commission in 2008:

Although it is unlikely for things like ordinances which were passed in Waukegan, Carpentersville, [or] Hazleton, Pennsylvania to be passed here, nonetheless a growing number of communities like ours that have long been reputed to be more open communities are feeling that they need to respond to some of these anti-immigrant ordinances with something more positive and are feeling a



necessity to take a leadership role. We would like to join other communities like Evanston to say that this is not our point of view and in so doing to encourage other communities to take actions as we have.

As Heuman mentions here, the proposed policy in Evanston was framed as a response to places like Carpentersville and Hazleton. She reiterated in a conversation with me the importance of making a statement about Evanston as a welcoming community in the wake of local anti-immigration activism elsewhere in the Chicago area and the United States.

The aforementioned examples demonstrate the ways in which local immigration policies involve a variety of jurisdictional scales and actors linked by regional and national networks. However, these examples also point to a profound unevenness in the types of immigration policies that gain traction at the local level. In the Chicago area, for example, FAIR mobilized actors who successfully brought a replica of Hazleton's IIRA ordinance to public debate in Carpentersville; however, while FAIR actors and knowledge of the Hazleton ordinance were similarly present in Evanston, they did not meet a welcoming audience as the city instead passed a resolution in favor of an entirely different sort of immigration reform. These divergent examples suggest that despite the influence of extralocal actors and forces in the local immigration debate, these policies are still highly contingent on the character of the communities in which they are considered.

## **The politics of place in the local immigration debate**

Interviewees commonly linked the type of local immigration policy considered with the conservative or progressive leanings of these places, reflecting the quantitative findings of Ramakrishnan and Wong (2010) and Walker and Leitner (2011). For example, Manassas, Carpentersville, and Cave Creek are all traditionally very politically conservative areas. As one Cave Creek contact said of the town, “There is no diversity in the town. And so there’s nobody to represent another point of view. It is militantly Republican.” This political conservatism is reflected in the political power structure of these communities. In Manassas, for example, no Democrats held elected city offices at the time the city considered its immigration policies, and only one city council member was not Republican. Conversely, Takoma Park and Evanston are well known for their leftward politics; one contact called Takoma Park “one of the most liberal cities in the nation,” for example. As a result, progressive immigration policies were more likely to find constituent support in these cities; conversely, a plurality of political activists in the more conservative areas voiced support for exclusionary policies.

The politics of place, however, reflects more than simply political leanings of the population. Rather, the political identities of these places are embedded in the social identity and history of these communities. As such, local immigration policies are not only localized responses to immigration issues, but more broadly are extensions of this local identity. In Rachel Heuman’s testimony to the Evanston Human Services

Commission cited above, she invokes Evanston's reputation as an "open" community in her repudiation of exclusionary local immigration policies. These sorts of place identities are crucial for understanding the reasons why some localities consider exclusionary policies, whereas others have enacted inclusive local immigration policies. For example, both Evanston and Takoma Park have a history of progressive local policy separate from their immigration policies.

Takoma Park, in particular, is well-known for its proclivity to consider progressive alternatives to national policy at the local level. In 1983, Takoma Park passed an ordinance entitled "The Takoma Park Nuclear Free Zone Act," which stipulates that the city will not tolerate any work on nuclear weapons within its limits. While this ordinance was largely symbolic, signs welcoming drivers into the city designate Takoma Park as a "nuclear free zone." Similarly, the Takoma Park city council once passed a resolution (since suspended) stating that the city will not conduct business with the military regime in Burma. In turn, Takoma Park viewed its policy responses to immigration as a natural continuation of this tradition of passing progressive local policy.

City officials in Takoma Park explained to me that its resolution to allow noncitizen voting has not had a large impact in influencing electoral results; in fact, few noncitizens actually take advantage of their voting rights in city elections. The importance of noncitizen voting in Takoma Park is not measured in terms of its tangible

impacts, they explained, but rather as a symbolic gesture that reflects the city's commitment to welcoming diversity. This commitment is ensconced in city policy language. The resolution to allow noncitizen suffrage reads in part:

WHEREAS, Takoma Park is a diverse community including people of many different nationalities, races, and economic circumstances; AND WHEREAS, Takoma Park welcomes the full participation in City affairs of all those who have chosen to make the city their home (Takoma Park Resolution 1992-5A).

While the "participation in city affairs" of noncitizen Takoma Park residents as measured by voter participation may be small, the policy is important to local officials as it functions to brand Takoma Park as a welcoming place that places racial, economic, and national diversity at the core of its local identity.

The immigration policies and policy debates in Evanston reflect a similar place identity politics. In 1985, Evanston also passed a resolution declaring the city as a nuclear free zone, much like Takoma Park, and also participated in the sanctuary movement for Central American refugees in the 1980s. Similar to Takoma Park, this tradition of political activism and progressivism informed the movement to pass an updated sanctuary resolution in Evanston in 2008. The original text of the sanctuary policy considered in Evanston reads in part:

WHEREAS, Evanston has long had a history of standing for justice, compassion, human rights, and peace as evidenced by City declarations of being a nuclear free zone, a sanctuary for Salvadoran refugees, and in opposition to the war in Iraq, and Evanston's proud tradition of valuing and promoting diversity.

Rachel Heuman similarly explained to me that part of the motivation for bringing forth this policy was to make a statement about the identity of Evanston. She told me, “We knew that people would respond affirmatively to this, because of [Evanston’s identity] as a progressive community, this is something that can reflect our values.” In turn, while the sanctuary policies considered in Takoma Park and Evanston were formulated to respond to specific political concerns – in this case to provide security to undocumented immigrants – they also reflect a broader tradition of political activism in these communities that has not always directly addressed the immigration issue.

Whereas places like Takoma Park and Evanston located openness at the core of their local identities, the localities that pursued exclusionary policy behaved very differently. The policies in Takoma Park and Evanston were designed to respond to the needs of all residents of these localities; in turn, the social identity of these places evolves with demographic change, and is open to both legal residents of the United States and undocumented immigrants. Conversely, exclusionary policy proposals rely on a conception of places as *bounded* that in turn are open only to certain types of residents. For example, the policy text of Carpentersville’s proposed IIRA ordinance reads in part:

Unlawful employment, the harboring of illegal aliens in dwelling units in the Village, and crime committed by illegal aliens harm the health, safety, and welfare of authorized U.S. workers and legal residents in the Village. The state and federal government lack the resources to properly protect the citizens of the Village of Carpentersville from the adverse effects of unauthorized employment, harboring of illegal aliens, and the activities of criminal aliens.

As indicated in the policy language, the proponents of the IIRA ordinance believed that two types of Carpentersville resident existed. The first group, composed of authorized residents of the US, deserves the full protection of the village against the adverse impacts brought by the second group, which consists of undocumented immigrants. Contrary to Takoma Park's willingness to grant rights to all individuals based on local residence, ordinance proponents in Carpentersville felt that only the group of "citizens of the Village" deserved these rights.

In Manassas and Prince William County, the local immigration policies may be shaped in part by deeply rooted social histories of these places. According to my conversations with local officials and community activists, part of the reason why Manassas and Prince William County framed themselves as bounded through policy was due to their Civil War history. As an immigration advocate in Manassas told me,

I would say that this community is still fighting the Civil War. And I don't think it's an accident in some ways that the immigration debate that hit headlines internationally in Prince William County started here. It's just that type of place.

Her comment speaks to some key issues about the politics of place identity in Manassas and Prince William County's immigration debates by linking the local immigration debate to a distinctive Southern racial politics that dates back to the Civil War. Manassas itself is not a quintessential post-war suburb; while it has many newer sections, the city has a distinctive Civil War history that it prides itself upon. The first major land battle of

the Civil War (the Battle of Bull Run) took place in Manassas; further, both Union and Confederate forces held Manassas at one point during the war.

As Winders (2007) has argued, political movements to deny benefits to undocumented immigrants framed these policies in cultural terms, as efforts to protect a Southern identity and “way of life” and in turn avoid racialized language. In some ways, the debates in Manassas and Prince William County reflect Winders’ findings. Manassas Police Chief John Skinner explained to me that Manassas “is a southern town in Northern Virginia” that had become caught up in the rapid outward expansion of the cosmopolitan Washington, DC metropolitan area. Other activists and local officials in the area reiterated this point about the role that Manassas’s Southern identity and historical significance as a Civil War battle site and crossroads have played in the local immigration conflict. Language invoking battle themes permeated the immigration conflict in Manassas and Prince William County. In fact, the activist organization Help Save Manassas’s newsletter is titled *The Front Line*, and uses language like “The Commanders Address the Troops” and “On The Field of Battle” as section titles in its newsletter. Resident testimonies in favor of a restrictionist immigration policy in Prince William County took on similar overtones. Said one Prince William resident in his testimony to the Board of County supervisors:

We are being invaded. We’ve been left alone by the federal government, by the state government, and by you. And if you haven’t paid attention to anything, anyone today has said to you, if you don’t remember, mark these words: We are

going to repel this invasion. One way or another, it will be repelled! You can either be part of that repulsion, or you can be part of the other side (HSM 2007, 13).

While the focus of the controversy in Manassas and Prince William was illegal immigration, this language suggests that the debate draws upon themes of battle and defense of place that are deeply rooted in the area's Civil War history. In turn, local immigration policy in Manassas may also represent a defense of a Southern "way of life" against larger forces such as the encroachment of cosmopolitan Washington, DC metropolitan area as well as the economic globalization that has brought immigrants to the area.

## **Conclusion**

As I have demonstrated in this paper, local immigration policies are the product of complex interactions between spatialities such as scale, networks, and place. My analysis of these policies lends support to the assertions of Leitner et al. (2008) and Jessop et al. (2008) that these spatialities are commonly co-implicated and should not be privileged above one another in any comprehensive analysis of spatial politics. However, this comparative study reveals that the extent to which such spatialities are co-implicated is highly context-dependent. The spatial politics of local immigration policy responses in geographically disparate US localities revealed many similarities. Several localities engaged in a politics of scale, considering local policies to address



immigration while simultaneously admonishing the federal government's stance on immigration policy. Further, activist networks sponsored by organizations like the Federation for American Immigration Reform made inroads into policy debates in both exclusionary as well as inclusive localities in this study. The ultimate decisions to adopt or not adopt local immigration policies, however, were heavily influenced by locality-specific social and political conditions. For example, while the same anti-immigration activist organizations were active in both Carpentersville and Evanston, they had more success accomplishing their policy goals in Carpentersville, as Evanston's politically progressive identity ran counter to these organizations' beliefs. Similarly, the heavy push for exclusionary policy at county and state levels in Arizona ultimately was crucial in shaping Chandler's immigration policy positions.

In turn, this paper builds upon the local immigration policy literature by providing specific examples of the complexity of local immigration policy responses. In doing so, I intend to complement the existing quantitative and theoretical work on local immigration policies by documenting the political struggles that confronted these communities. In Carpentersville, for example, a research approach uniquely focused on the politics of scale may have emphasized its resolutions and local ordinances designed to engage the immigration issue at federal and local levels; similarly, an approach attuned to place-based characteristics may have focused on the quantitative increase in its immigrant population as well as the political conservatism of the northwestern

Chicago suburbs. While these assertions are both correct (as I argue in this paper), it is also crucial to account how they are co-implicated with a politics of networking that brought anti-immigration activists from outside the village to village board meetings, and provided Carpentersville trustees with a model IIRA ordinance designed by FAIR. Without these influences, it is possible that Carpentersville would have never considered local immigration policies, as was suggested by some of my interviewees in the village.

This analysis also suggests some important avenues for future research. While I provide some evidence of the role of activist organization networks in pushing for local immigration policy responses, I do not provide a complete account of how these networks operate across space. Further in-depth research could map out the structure of these activist networks, and explore the diverse stakeholders they engage to advance their immigration policy agendas. Further, my focus on networks was limited to anti-immigration organizations; however, many pro-immigrant organizations have mobilized as well in the local immigration policy debate in the United States. Future research could provide a deeper analysis of their influence, and how it compares with or differs from that of organizations such as FAIR.

Additionally, as this paper builds upon the theoretical contributions of Leitner et al. (2008) and Jessop et al. (2008), it provides a framework for future analyses of local policies more generally within geography. While scale, networks, and place are certainly

important for the analysis of local immigration policies, other spatialities such as socio-spatial positionality that I do not address may have key roles to play. For example, while Latinos in Manassas and Carpentersville are approaching 40 to 50 percent of the total population, they are not proportionately represented in city government (neither of which has a Latino on the city council at the time of this writing). Further research could account for the ways in which the preservation of traditional power structures has influenced local policy decisions, and examine what happens to these policy positions when the power structure changes. Further, while I have applied this framework to the analysis of immigration policy (which is inherently multi-scalar in nature), other geographical scholarship could examine the extent to which this co-implication of diverse spatialities is replicated in other types of contentious local policies, in realms such as sustainability planning, education, and social justice.

## **CHAPTER 4: IMMIGRATION, LOCAL POLICY, AND THE “AMERICAN DREAM” IN THE SUBURBAN UNITED STATES**

### **Introduction**

Historically, most immigrants to the United States have originally settled in large gateway cities. In recent years, however, the settlement geography of US immigration has changed dramatically. New immigrant gateways in the US South and West have emerged as sites of rapid foreign-born growth (Singer 2008). Within both established gateways and these new destinations, the fastest-growing immigrant populations are often found in the suburbs (Hardwick 2008). In some instances, the settlement of highly-skilled immigrants in the suburbs reflects the decentralization of white-collar employment within US metropolitan areas. Similarly, lower-skilled immigrants have moved to US suburbs to take jobs in a variety of industries, including construction, landscaping, and the service sector (Hardwick 2008). As a result, many suburban communities with little or no history of foreign-born settlement have experienced a dramatic influx of both documented and undocumented immigrants within the last ten years.

These demographic trends create the potential for a cultural clash in some suburbs between newer, unassimilated immigrants and suburban native populations unaccustomed to their presence. Suburbs in the United States have a long history of resisting the settlement of low-income individuals and racial and ethnic minorities

through mortgage discrimination and blockbusting (Freund 2007). Further, some research has revealed a potential link between suburban residence and hostility toward immigration. In an analysis of survey attitudes regarding immigration policy, Fennelly and Federico (2008) find that suburban respondents are significantly more likely to favor a restrictive federal immigration policy than central city respondents even after controlling for demographic characteristics. Undocumented immigrants in the suburbs would then be doubly out of place, as they have few cultural similarities to the established suburban population and are settling in areas where residents are more likely to view them unfavorably because of their lack of legal status.

This potential tension between new immigrants and long-term residents of the suburbs has found political expression in recent years, as dozens of suburban localities have introduced local policies restricting the settlement of undocumented immigrants in recent years. These policies have taken a variety of forms. Several localities have considered Illegal Immigration Relief Act ordinances, which include penalties for employing and renting housing to undocumented immigrants. While these policies were modeled after the proposal first passed in 2006 by the small town of Hazleton, Pennsylvania, many of the communities that followed Hazleton's example were suburban (Walker and Leitner 2011). Other policies have included the deputization of local police to perform immigration enforcement through a 287(g) agreement with US Immigration and Customs Enforcement; and "quality of life" measures such as housing

code enforcement that have disproportionately affected immigrant and Hispanic households (Coleman 2009; Varsanyi 2008). While a few progressive suburbs such as Takoma Park, Maryland and Evanston, Illinois are noteworthy for their efforts to incorporate immigrants regardless of legal status, Walker and Leitner (2011) find that exclusionary immigration policies outnumber inclusive policies in suburban municipalities by a ratio of 3 to 1.

The purpose of this paper is to provide a basis for explaining the prevalence of exclusionary immigration policies in American suburbs. Some scholars have attributed these responses to the types of racialized attitudes that accompanied white flight from central cities in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and in turn reflect a ‘defense’ of a suburban middle-class ideal (Fennelly and Federico 2008; Brettell and Nibbs 2011; Lemanski and Saff 2010). They link a specific suburban vision of the “American Dream” – one that situates American national identity in suburbs that are racially and economically homogenous – and local policies that seek to drive away undocumented immigrants. Walker and Leitner (2011) formulate a similar hypothesis in light of their finding that suburbs are quantitatively more likely to consider exclusionary immigration policies than central cities. They write, “In terms of exclusionary policies introduced by suburban municipalities, it is the dominant association of the suburb as the place for the realization of the American Dream, which we hypothesize helps to explain the prevalence of anti-immigration ordinances in suburban municipalities” (201, 165).

Such assertions, however, rely on either one American case study, or are not fully fleshed out through a comparative qualitative analysis. In this paper, I employ a comparative analysis to test the hypothesis that a relationship exists between the suburban ideal/American Dream and exclusionary immigration policies, and to determine whether this relationship is generalizable across different suburban contexts. I analyze three suburbs that debated exclusionary immigration policies in the late 2000s: Manassas, Virginia, Carpentersville, Illinois, and Cave Creek, Arizona. I find that these exclusionary responses to undocumented immigrants are indeed framed as a defense of a suburban ideal that privileges American identity and immigrant assimilation to a homogenous national culture. However, suburban anti-immigration policies represent more than a defense of American identity. They also relate closely to locality-specific forms of the suburban ideal that are strongly linked to the respective identities and histories of each community, and are under threat from new metropolitan economic and demographic changes. In turn, exclusionary policies in the suburbs are framed simultaneously as a defense of national culture as well as local identity and economic stability in the face of potential suburban decline and metropolitan restructuring.

## Literature review: Immigrants, the American Dream, and the “suburban ideal”

While the term “sub-urban” implies a type of settlement that is inferior in status to that of the urban, suburbs have long been sites of aspiration in the United States. Scholars such as Robert Fishman (1987) and John Archer (2005) have shown how in 19<sup>th</sup> century England, new relationships between the individual, family, property, and society led a growing bourgeois class to abandon the city for suburban settlements. As such, suburbs became identified as *not only* the physical space away from the city but also the space where the social relations associated with suburbia were practiced. As John Archer explains, this philosophy of individual self-determination as expressed through suburbanization was translated in the United States as a mythological ‘American Dream.’ “The core of the dream,” he writes, “always has focused on private aspirations for personal, individual advancement” (2005, 251).

This suburban American Dream relies on a specific conception of suburban space in which a high quality of life is ensured. As the American Dream represents a certain set of social values (e.g. the “pursuit of happiness” in American national mythology), the suburb has served for many as the geographical manifestation of that Dream (Anderson 2010). Purcell (2001) frames this spatial vision as the “suburban ideal.” He explains:

The suburban ideal does more than set out “what looks nice.” It defines a *moral* standard for the neighborhood: the suburban landscape is decent, pure, and nourishing, while the city is corrupt, contaminated, and injurious. By extension,



those who live in the suburbs are decent and pure, while those who live elsewhere are corrupt and contaminated (Purcell 2001, 183).

Purcell's formulation of the "suburban ideal" thus consists of both an idealized suburban *space*, but also an idealized suburban *resident* who inhabits those spaces; that is, someone who is "decent and pure." As scholars of the American city have demonstrated, efforts to preserve this suburban ideal have often generated racial and class exclusions through both federal and local policies (Jackson 1985; Kruse 2005; Freund 2007).

The association between the American Dream and the suburban ideal has situated American national identity in the suburbs. Indeed, the massive post-World War II suburbanization in the United States occurred concurrently with the escalation of Cold War hostilities between the US and the Soviet Union, making the low-density, privatized American suburb a spatial model of American individualism which contrasted with the planned urbanism of Communist societies. As developer William Levitt famously remarked, "No man who owns his own home and lot can be a communist. He has too much to do" (Beauregard 2006, 156). This representation of the suburb as the quintessential 'American' space was exemplified by the 1959 'kitchen debate' between Vice President Nixon and Nikita Khrushchev in Moscow. The debate took place at an exhibit hall containing a variety of American goods, with a model of a suburban-style single-family home outside. Nixon used this model as an exemplar of the American way of life, posing it against what was available in the USSR (Beauregard 2006).

Other authors have observed how linkages between US suburbanization and national identity created a distinctive form of politics. McGirr (2001) traces the foundations of the conservative movement that propelled Presidents Nixon and Reagan to national office to the social ideals (e.g. privacy, individualism, private property rights) cultivated by the decentralized urban morphology of suburban Orange County, California. Similarly, Kruse (2005) and Lassiter (2006) find that the racial politics of mid-20<sup>th</sup> century segregation and “white flight” to suburbs ultimately evolved into a broader politics of privatization and individual rights, forming the foundation for the modern Conservative movement in the US.

The link between upward social mobility and suburban residence as represented by the “American Dream” is found in some of the 20<sup>th</sup> century’s most influential models of metropolitan immigrant assimilation and incorporation. In the “concentric zone” models laid out in their seminal 1925 text *The City*, the sociologists of the Chicago School proposed that immigrants first settle in slums near the urban core and move outward to peripheral settlements as they achieve upward social mobility. This model was later formalized into a theory of spatial assimilation by Douglas Massey in 1985. While some studies have criticized spatial assimilation theory’s reliance on the suburb as an assimilative destination (Wright et al. 2005), scholars have generally found support for the link between increased immigrant income and residential proximity to whites (Allen and Turner 2009; Clark 2006; Logan et al. 1996; South et al. 2005; South et al.

2008). In turn, a particular type of immigrant has historically settled in the suburbs: one that conforms (or seeks to conform) with suburban values reflected in the American Dream.

Recent demographic trends, however, challenge spatial assimilation theory and its assumptions about immigrant settlement behavior. Suburbs now house a majority of the US foreign-born population, and many immigrants are settling in suburban communities upon arrival to the US (Singer et al. 2008). Such immigrants often have comparatively lower indicators of socioeconomic status, such as English language proficiency and educational attainment (Walker 2007; Singer et al. 2009). The racial characteristics of these new immigrants are also significant, as in many areas of rapid suburban growth and demographic change, Hispanic immigrants predominate (Singer et al. 2009). In turn, the ethnic background of these new immigrants may lead to racially-motivated suspicions among residents that they have entered the United States illegally. As historian Mae Ngai (2004) demonstrates, authorities often made distinctions in US immigration admissions between “legal” and “illegal” immigrants based upon Hispanic migrants’ racial characteristics. In turn, argues Romero (2008), poor Latinos carry a bodily “figurative border” that leads to assumptions about their nationality and legality.

Brettell and Nibbs (2011) argue that a disjuncture between a suburban ideal and demographic change has informed exclusionary immigration policy responses in the Dallas suburb of Farmers Branch, which passed an IIRA ordinance in 2007. They contend

that “the anti-immigrant legislation in Farmers Branch is a defensive strategy against people who have been constructed as a discursive threat to middle class suburban identity” (2011, 20). Specifically, they argue that American identity is represented spatially by the suburbs; in turn, an American “rule of law” is particularly salient in these communities. As such, they contend that those who break American laws – such as entering the country illegally – are in turn unwelcome in suburbs as the violation of *national* laws becomes a violation of the local ideal. Similarly, Lemanski and Saff (2010) have observed how mobilizations to exclude undocumented immigrants on Long Island, NY were framed as efforts to preserve suburban socio-cultural values. In doing so, they write, Long Island residents commonly suggested that these immigrants threatened an “American way of life” that was situated in the suburbs (Lemanski and Saff 2010, 519). In their studies, these authors demonstrate how the suburban ideal as expressed through local anti-immigration policy activism is also framed as a defense of an *American* ideal, that just so happens to be represented by their communities. This idealized vision of the suburb is not just threatened by demographic changes, however. In fact, larger economic and social processes are contributing to the devalorization of American suburbia as a whole, which in turn may be provoking a backlash against immigrants as scapegoats.

A growing urban literature is taking seriously the causes and implications of suburban decline, rejecting the stereotype that all suburbs are homogenous and

affluent. In their book *Cities and Suburbs*, Hanlon, Short, and Vicino (2010) introduce the concept of the “suburban gothic.” The suburban gothic refers a variety of ills currently confronting many suburbs in the wake of continued metropolitan expansion. These include the devalorization of older suburbs caught between central city revitalization and outer sprawl; the environmental costs of metropolitan decentralization; and suburban fiscal instability, best exemplified by the recent housing market crash and resulting foreclosure crisis.

The distinct political and social geography of American suburbia, long privileged by upwardly mobile metropolitan residents, now presents substantial challenges to suburban stability. As Murphy (2007) observes, residents of struggling suburbs may face diminished access to public transportation and public services. Smaller suburbs often now lack the tax base and adequate public infrastructure to cope with decline, and do not have the business and cultural institutions to attract new investment (Orfield 2002; Hanlon, Short, and Vicino 2010). In turn, while an influx of racial or ethnic minorities (such as undocumented immigrants) have often been blamed for suburban decline and in turn used as justification for the implementation of exclusionary policy, the real culprit may be economic disinvestment. As Smith, Caris, and Wyly (2001) argue, low-income or racial/ethnic minority populations often begin to move into a suburb after the cycle of decline and disinvestment has already commenced. As such, they contend

that efforts to exclude these populations, and scapegoat them for causing decline, would be misguided.

In this paper, I interpret contemporary suburban anti-illegal immigration policies as a defense of the suburban ideal. As Purcell (2001, 183) writes:

Defense of the suburban ideal is therefore simultaneously a spatial and a social goal. A proper landscape and a decent, moral society are bound up together in the suburban ideal's vision. Defense of the geography is defense of the society, and vice versa.

By implementing exclusionary immigration policies, suburbs are creating meaningful sub-national boundaries in an effort to *defend the local geography*. In doing so, however, such policies are framed as a *defense of the society*. As I will show in this paper, "society" refers in this instance as a spatial vision informed by the American Dream. Both native-born and immigrant residents should conform to this vision, which includes both local expectations of behavior consistent with the American middle-class, as well as conceptions of immigrant legality and assimilation to the American mainstream culture. However, this formulation of the suburban ideal presumes a homogenous vision of the American suburb. Instead, I argue that place-specific social identities and economic insecurities also inform local exclusionary immigration policies in the suburbs. As such, while the suburban ideal is a national vision, its significance and characteristics are shaped by the suburbs in which it is practiced.

Data collection and analysis for this study took place between 2008 and 2010. I selected these three suburbs for detailed study as part of a larger project on the variegated landscape of local immigration policy responses across the United States. The three metropolitan areas I studied (Chicago, Washington DC, and Phoenix) represent different “immigrant gateway” types as specified by Singer (2004)<sup>21</sup>, and reflect different geographic contexts within the United States. I provide evidence from a suburban community in each metropolitan area that considered local immigration-related policies between 2005 and 2008: Manassas, Virginia, Carpentersville, Illinois, and Cave Creek, Arizona. For each locality, I collected archival materials including publicly available ordinance documentation; related city documents concerning immigration issues; city council minutes; activist newsletters; and media coverage of these debates. Based on the information contained in these documents, I identified key informants in each suburb that played important roles in the immigration policy debates. I then traveled to each suburb in 2009 to conduct semi-structured interviews with these informants in person, which I later transcribed and coded for major themes. Additionally, I visited each city hall and collected policy documentation and other archival materials that were not publicly available, and toured and photographed each community. In the following section, I discuss and analyze each suburb in turn. First, I

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<sup>21</sup> According to Singer (2004), Chicago is a continuous immigrant gateway, with large immigrant inflows both historically and in the present day; Washington is an emerging gateway, with rapid growth since 1980; and Phoenix is a re-emerging gateway, as its immigration levels were once high at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and have increased rapidly again in recent decades.

provide an overview of the conditions surrounding the immigration policy debates in each community. I then provide evidence of how local actors in each suburb framed their policies as a defense of the suburban ideal.

### **Manassas, Virginia**

Manassas is an independent city within Virginia's Prince William County, an outer suburb of Washington, DC. The city has grown 29 percent since 1990; however, the Hispanic population has grown 485 percent during this period, now constituting nearly 26 percent of the city's population; the immigrant population similarly has increased by 294 percent (See Table 5). During this time, Manassas residents began making complaints to local officials about residential overcrowding, which they associated with the growing Hispanic population. In response, the City established a "Residential Overcrowding Code Enforcement Task Force" in 2004; approximately 85 percent of households investigated by the Task Force housed Hispanic residents (*Equal Rights Center v. City of Manassas*, 2007). In late 2005, the Manassas City Council passed an ordinance that redefined "family" in the Manassas City Code. This ordinance stipulated that in most instances, "family" would only refer to immediately related individuals, such as parents, children, and grandparents; other family members, such as aunts, uncles, or cousins could only be included as exceptions and after verified by a



zoning administrator (*City of Manassas* 2005). The City was later sued by several Manassas residents, who claimed that this definition disproportionately negatively impacted the Manassas Hispanic community. The City later rescinded the ordinance and settled the case.

The demise of the housing ordinance did not bring an end to resident agitation around immigration in Manassas, however. In 2007, local activist and blogger Greg Letiecq founded the anti-illegal immigration organization Help Save Manassas (HSM), which on its website states its goal of influencing “legislative action to reduce the number of illegal aliens in our community.” In order to accomplish this goal, HSM put pressure on public officials in Manassas and neighboring Prince William County, which at the time was considering its own measures to target undocumented immigrants. In 2007, Prince William County passed Resolution 07-609, which among other measures directed police to check the immigration status of all detained individuals, and in 2008 both Prince William County and Manassas signed 287(g) agreements with ICE (Singer et al. 2009).

In Manassas, members of the activist organization Help Save Manassas commonly spoke of the need to preserve the American Dream that they had sought out in the area. In the December 2007 issue of *The Front Line*, Help Save Manassas’s newsletter, HSM vice president Dan Arnold wrote of the relationship between immigration, the American Dream, and local neighborhoods:

Our neighborhood. Where our kids ride their bikes and our families take walks. The place where the American dream becomes reality. Neighborhoods should be an extension of our homes, a place where we feel secure, surrounded by friends and insulated from the rigors and stresses of the rest of the world. . . Unfortunately, the illegal alien problem is dramatically diminishing the stability and security of the American neighborhood. Numerous homes once occupied by “known quantities,” fellow Americans we could at least identify with on many levels, are now being replaced en masse by foreigners, many of whom are here illegally (Arnold 2007, 2-9).

Arnold’s formulation of the neighborhood where the American dream is realized resembles that of the idealized suburban space proposed by Purcell (2001): secure, friendly, and importantly “insulated” from the rest of the world. This suburban ideal, however, is threatened by the presence of undocumented immigrants. He follows that formerly “known quantities” in the neighborhood (who he interestingly terms as Mr. and Mrs. Smith) are being replaced by foreigners or illegal immigrants. In the text that follows, Arnold writes that these undocumented immigrants could possibly be criminals or sex offenders, and in turn “our needed sense of security fades” (2007, 9). This passage represents precisely what Purcell (2001) terms the “corrupt” population that does not belong in the suburbs, and in turn threatens the security of the “pure” populations that *should* be living in those spaces.

The efforts to preserve the American Dream in Manassas are echoed by HSM president Greg Letiecq in the April 2008 issue of *The Front Line*. Letiecq (2008, 2) writes, “The illegal aliens are leaving our communities in droves, cowed by the entirely unexpected response of American citizens who rose up as patriots and refused to

succumb to the theft of their American dream.” He follows that other communities like Prince William are beginning to act in similar ways in order to “take back what is rightfully theirs.” While the language used by Letiecq is strongly nationalistic/nativist, it also relies on a conception of Manassas and Prince William County as a place where local residents ought to be able to participate in the American dream. Undocumented immigrants, who are framed as both unassimilable and the functional opposite of American citizens in the County, do not mesh with this vision of Prince William and ought to be excluded in order to preserve the community for its “rightful” residents.

The link between national and local identity in Prince William is ably illustrated by a comment from a Manassas caller during an August 31, 2007 televised debate between HSM president Greg Letiecq and Nancy Lyall, a representative of the immigrant advocacy organization Mexicans Without Borders. The caller stated, “Most of us don’t know, and few of us really care, who’s legal and who’s not... it’s pretty much a backlash to the huge influx of new immigrants not respecting our culture... it’s really about assimilation.” When pressed for examples by the moderator on what constitutes a lack of immigrant assimilation, she followed, “The behavior of large groups of men in the street, and music and overcrowding and cars parked on lawns... it’s not the community it used to be” (News Channel 8 2007). The Manassas resident claims that the unwillingness of immigrants to assimilate is at the core of agitation around immigration in the community – and that the markers of this lack of assimilation include the types of

behaviors that Manassas and other communities have sought to regulate through local policy.

While the aforementioned examples directly address immigration issues, comments from other local officials and immigration advocates suggests that the backlash against immigrants in Manassas and Prince William related to broader anxieties about suburban population growth. In an illustrative example, the letter authored by the city of Manassas to Gov. Jack Warner begins with a direct statement situating these concerns within processes of urban sprawl. The passage reads:

The City of Manassas, Virginia, hereafter referred to as “the City,” is experiencing unprecedented growth in its population causing significant demand on its limited public services, including water and sewer capacity, police, fire, emergency rescue services, health care, social services, schools, housing resources, zoning and code enforcement.

The letter then follows:

Based upon the City’s local law and code enforcement experiences, it is the City’s belief that a significant contributor to this increased demand on public services and the resulting overcrowding is the result of the presence of large numbers of undocumented or illegal aliens.

While in this passage Manassas blames immigrants for a large share of its economic troubles, it is important to note that these problems are framed as a result of the population growth taking place in the Manassas/Prince William County area.

Nearly all of my contacts in the Manassas/Prince William area linked the immigration issue with that of suburban and metropolitan growth. Given the high cost

of housing in the Washington, DC metropolitan area, Prince William County grew rapidly due to its relative proximity to DC and Northern Virginia employment centers and due to the presence of affordable housing. In turn, immigrants concentrated in places with available affordable housing like Manassas in order to work in the area's burgeoning construction and service industries. As Nancy Lyall of the advocacy organization Mexicans Without Borders told me, the local Latino and immigrant populations grew much faster than attitudes changed about their presence. Manassas immigration lawyer and advocate Lisa Johnson-Firth reiterated this point:

I think the single number one reason [for the immigration controversy] was that this area was already conservative, predominantly white, you know some people living here since the Civil War, they've got ancestry here, they've grown up here, and then dump a bunch of brand new people into the community, especially Latinos that have an extremely different culture, and you're going to have problems. . . . [Manassas and Prince William County] weren't prepared for population growth period, but then to have a huge number of those be immigrants, was really very hard for this community.

The Civil War history mentioned by Johnson-Firth was another theme that emerged in the interviews; she also remarked that Manassas, in some ways, "is still fighting the Civil War." Manassas itself is not a quintessential post-war suburb; while it has many newer sections, the core of the city is much older and has the feel of a small, Southern town. As one contact told me, Manassas's identity is one of a "Southern town in Northern Virginia." As population growth in the Prince William County area exploded, Manassas transitioned very rapidly from a Southern town to a DC suburb. In turn, as my contacts explained, Manassas's policy responses to undocumented immigration related

more broadly to anxieties around a loss of local identity in the wake of the encroachment of a Northern metropolis on the area.

	Percent foreign-born, 1990	Percent foreign-born, 2000	Percent foreign-born, 2005-2007	Percent Hispanic, 1990	Percent Hispanic, 2000	Percent Hispanic, 2005-07
Manassas	7.6	14.2	23.2	5.8	15.2	25.9
Carpentersville	9.9	26.4	34.8	16.3	41.3	49.2
Cave Creek	6.7	6.9	7.6*	5.2	7.8	6.3*

Table 5: Demographic changes in Manassas, Carpentersville, and Cave Creek, 1990-2007. Recent figures from Manassas and Carpentersville are from the 2005-2007 American Community Survey estimates. Recent figures from Cave Creek are from the 2005-2009 ACS estimates due to the unavailability of 2005-2007 data.

### **Carpentersville, Illinois**

Carpentersville is a northwestern suburb of Chicago in Illinois' Fox River Valley.

The village includes three general sections: older homes along the banks of the Fox River; an eastern section with smaller, postwar single-family homes and apartments, which is largely Hispanic; and newer, high-income subdivisions on the western side of the village, which are largely white. Like Manassas, Carpentersville has changed rapidly in recent years, as both the Hispanic and foreign-born populations grew rapidly between 1990 and 2007 (see Table 5).

In 2006 at a meeting of the village's Audit and Finance Commission, Village Trustee Paul Humpfer introduced an "Illegal Immigration Relief Act Ordinance." He stated that overcrowding in the Village contributed to a loss of property taxes, and that unpaid ambulance bills created fiscal burdens. Originally, Humpfer inferred that many of the Carpentersville residents with outstanding bills were in the country illegally due to their Hispanic surnames (Kotlowitz 2007). The ordinance sought to penalize employers and landlords of undocumented immigrants, and to involve local police officers in immigration enforcement as part of the 287(g) program.

Over 3000 people arrived at Village Hall to advocate on behalf of or against the ordinance, leading the Board of Trustees to table the ordinance until a suitable venue to discuss the ordinance could be located. Ultimately, Humpfer and co-sponsor Judy Sigwalt decided to table the ordinance indefinitely, but not after it had propelled them to victory in the 2007 Board of Trustee elections, and had led many Hispanic families to leave the village (Cabello, personal interview). Despite the failure to enact the IIRA ordinance, Carpentersville did discuss and later pass other immigration-related measures, including a resolution declaring English its official language and an impoundment ordinance that overwhelmingly impacted the local immigrant population (Ramirez Sliwinski, personal interview; Bonesatti, personal interview).

In the three suburbs, proponents of restrictive immigration policies frequently invoked assimilationist discourse to bolster their claims. In Carpentersville, Trustee

Sigwalt provided a telling response when asked about the contemporary immigrant population in the town: “They want the American Dream, but they don’t want to assimilate... Immigrants are what made this country great, but the immigrants of yesterday and the immigrants of today are totally different people. They don’t have the love of this country in their hearts” (Kotlowitz 2007). Sigwalt spoke in similar terms during a debate around the immigration ordinance in the village: “The country has been crying out loud and clear as to what they want . . . As far as the law, I don’t expect to get out of a parking ticket. The American people are angry . . . While illegal aliens are looking for their dreams, the American people are losing theirs” (Kotlowitz 2007). Sigwalt speaks directly here of the relationship between immigrant assimilation, the American Dream, and local belonging in Carpentersville. In her view, immigrants are seeking upward mobility, yet are doing so without sufficiently assimilating to the host society; in this instance, assimilating spatially to a suburban ideal that situates itself in Carpentersville. Interestingly, Sigwalt believes that the presence of undocumented immigrants and the ability of native-born Americans to achieve the American Dream are mutually exclusive, which is very similar to the remarks from Help Save Manassas members detailed earlier.

In turn, Carpentersville policy placed an emphasis on immigrant assimilation, particularly in the context of English language acquisition. English language ability is commonly used as a key indicator of spatial assimilation amongst immigrants, as it



provides some evidence that immigrants are engaging (or attempting to engage) with the Anglo majority rather than limiting themselves to ethnic and linguistic enclaves (South et al. 2005). This theoretical link between language, assimilation, and perceived social cohesion had practical significance in Carpentersville. In 2007, Carpentersville considered an ordinance and later passed a non-binding resolution declaring English as the village's official language; the policy text stated that the resolution would "establish a linguistic unity that brings a critically needed cohesion to a Village as diverse, multiracial and multiethnic as Carpentersville." In an April 17, 2007 testimony to the Village Board in support of the English-only ordinance, Fox Valley Citizens for Legal Immigration president Bob Sperlazzo spoke in similar terms:

"Immigrants of many nationalities built our community, but the melting pot melded us into one people. This long tradition of assimilation has always included the adoption of English as the common means of communication... Knowledge of English leads to the realization of the American Dream of increased economic opportunity and the ability to become a more productive member of society" (Ast 2007).

Sperlazzo employs a specific conception of Carpentersville as a community where immigrants should assimilate to the dominant culture, and in turn should participate in the pursuit of an upwardly mobile American Dream. Not doing so, he argues later in his testimony, leads to divisiveness and conflict. The assumption in both Sperlazzo's testimony and the Carpentersville ordinance is that social cohesion is predicated upon such indicators of assimilation. Purportedly, unassimilated immigrants (in this instance,

those who do not speak English well) cannot adequately mesh with other residents of the village.

Interestingly, this divide between the new immigrants and the white residents of Carpentersville is reflected in the village's social geography. The first waves of postwar suburban growth in the village took place on the east side of Carpentersville, and were characterized largely by small "starter homes" to house returning veterans. The more recent growth has taken place on the western part of Carpentersville, leaving the eastern side of the village to stagnate and fall into decline. In turn, a large immigrant and Latino community has populated the eastern part of the village, as these neighborhoods in Carpentersville provided affordable housing for immigrants working in service industries in wealthier suburbs nearby. The prospect of this kind of change – which some residents associated with the presence of immigrants – led to anxieties in the village about its social identity. For example, one of the co-sponsors of the immigration ordinance, Judy Sigwalt, had remarked that she began to feel "lonely" in her east Carpentersville neighborhood because she could not communicate with her Spanish-speaking neighbors. In turn, she moved to the west side of the village, and in testimony at village board meetings she invoked the preponderance of Spanish-speaking in the village to justify her political positions (Kotlowitz 2007; Ramirez Sliwinski, personal interview).

The immigration debate in Carpentersville was also wrapped up in broader concerns around suburban decline. Carpentersville, in particular, has struggled in the wake of the recent economic crisis, as rates of unemployment and foreclosure have been among the highest in its county, Kane. Silvia Realzola, a Carpentersville immigration advocate and activist, observed a potential link between the fear of decline and the support for the immigration ordinance:

In my opinion, when I would look at those people that were in accordance with these types of laws, the people here that I came across with that were very angry, they were disappointed with where they were in their life. So they were looking for somebody to blame for their inability to say, achieve the American Dream. So you know they were saying “my property, it’s not worth anything because the property next door has undocumented people.” But regardless of whether they were undocumented or not, they were Latino, they had no way of knowing whether or not they were undocumented. It was just brown skin, brown hair, brown eyes, they have an accent, they have a larger family, therefore they were undocumented.

While Realzola’s points are undoubtedly subjective observations of the debate in Carpentersville, her comment does touch on a number of key points. She links the stances of ordinance proponents with a broader narrative of upward mobility and the American Dream—one that these proponents may not have achieved. For example, she observed concerns about property values in her conversations with ordinance supporters, an issue that was common to Manassas and Cave Creek as well.

## **Cave Creek, Arizona**

Cave Creek, a small town of approximately 5,000 residents on the northern border of Phoenix, incorporated in 1986 to avoid being subsumed by the city's continued northward sprawl. According to recent estimates, Cave Creek's foreign-born population was relatively small compared to Manassas and Carpentersville, constituting 7.6 percent of the town's total population. In the mid-2000s, immigrant day laborers began congregating in the town; these laborers generally did not live in Cave Creek but arrived daily for work. As there are no sidewalks along Cave Creek Road, the town's main commercial strip, day laborers would frequently stand very close to the roadway, prompting complaints from local businesses about the day laborers' impact on potential customers. A local Episcopalian church, Good Shepherd of the Hills, offered a solution by running a day labor center out of its parking lot. The church established a registration system that tracked the skills of the laborers to assist with arranging employment with potential patrons; eventually, the center established an identification card system for the laborers, and local restaurants would donate day-old food to the center (Jenks, personal interview).

The presence of the day labor center caused considerable controversy. The American Freedom Riders motorcycle gang began harassing day laborers at the center, and Maricopa County Sheriff Joe Arpaio conducted a series of immigration raids there. Don Sorchych, the editor of the influential local newspaper *The Sonoran News*, followed

patrons hiring the laborers, took photos of their license plates, and published the photos in his newspaper. Sorchych believed that by doing so, he was exposing individuals who were employing undocumented immigrants (Sorchych, personal interview). In response to mounting tensions in the community, the Cave Creek town council passed two ordinances designed to limit the ability of day laborers to seek work. The first ordinance amended the town's traffic code to prohibit individuals from soliciting employment from vehicles; the second ordinance prohibited loitering (*Town of Cave Creek* 2007a; b). The ACLU of Arizona sued Cave Creek on behalf of several day laborers; a judge later blocked the ordinances in 2008 (*Hector Lopez v. Town of Cave Creek*, 2008). While the ordinances were in effect for several months, they were never enforced (Stein, personal interview). Currently, the presence of day laborers in Cave Creek is minimal; local officials attribute this as much to the 2008 economic recession as to the day labor ordinances (Francia, personal interview).

The situation in Cave Creek was somewhat different than Carpentersville and Manassas, given that few of the immigrants who were agitating local residents actually lived in the town, but rather commuted there from elsewhere for work. The debate around day labor in Cave Creek took on similar themes, however. During a forum at the June 17, 2007 town council meeting on day labor, resident comments made it clear that the real agitations did not concern day labor per se, but rather the illegal hiring of undocumented workers in the town. Said one Cave Creek resident: "The last seven

months a small group of residents has spent Saturday mornings in front of the Good Shepherd Church reminding potential employers that it is against the law to hire illegals. We do this because we care about this community.” Similarly, stated one Cave Creek activist at a 2007 town council meeting, “Many believe if you are against illegal immigrants you are racist and that is not true. It’s about economics. We need to take care of Americans first. Americans are losing jobs.” In these comments, residents state that the presence of undesirable immigrants directly threatens the security of ‘Americans’ in the town—which is an intrinsic part of how the suburban ideal informs local immigration policies, as examples from Manassas and Carpentersville also suggest.

Proponents of the day labor ordinances in Cave Creek also framed undocumented immigrants as individuals who did not fit with the town’s unique image. When I asked Don Sorchych how he could distinguish illegal immigrants from legal immigrants, he explained:

Well you take a look at the typical [illegal immigrant]- it’s like a cartoonist draws. They have work shoes, they have denim pants, they have gloves sticking out their pocket, they have billed caps, maybe a lunch bag. If they were legal, they wouldn’t be doing that, they’d be employed somewhere.

For Sorchych, the difference between illegality and legality is based on his perception of social class. The undesirable immigrants in Cave Creek are dressed like low-wage laborers; more desirable immigrants in the town would conversely display signs of social (and potentially, spatial) assimilation, such as higher-wage jobs and dress that reflects

this type of employment. Sorchych elaborated on this in his description of a friend of Mexican origin in the town:

First of all, when you talk about people who lived here who are say Mexican, or South American, or whatever- [they are] very well integrated into the community. That's never been an issue here. A matter of fact over here across the road (place) they had a night manager, married, had three kids, just naturally wonderful, everybody loves this guy. It's no secret that he's Mexican. But illegals are totally different.

The distinction that Sorchych makes between the presumably 'assimilated' Cave Creek resident and undocumented immigrants reveals the importance of spatial assimilation to the local immigration debate. Sorchych's efforts to rid Cave Creek of day laborers were targeted specifically at a particular class of immigrant that in his view did not fit in the community.

According to others involved in the Cave Creek debate, the resistance of Sorchych and his allies to the presence of poor immigrants was in part an effort to protect the town's unique image. Said Fr. Glenn Jenks, who ran the day labor center in Cave Creek, about Sorchych's efforts and the town's image:

Don Sorchych's single minded object is to drive every poor person out of town, because they're not good for the image. Town doesn't look good with poor people walking around. It's why he not only hated what we did, he hated Habitat for Humanity- anything that did anything for low-income people, he's out to get. So it's a very, very unique community and I thought it a very attractive community, and I still think so. Because it's got character, it's got some unique identity and it's cool. But, the way they protect it sometimes is kind of cruel.

For Jenks, the day laborers in the town did not fit with an idealized image of Cave Creek promoted by Sorchych and others, and in turn provoked hostility. Interviewees also spoke of comparisons between Cave Creek and the town of Carefree, a community that borders Cave Creek to the east. They referenced Carefree as a wealthier version of Cave Creek (its median household income in 2005-2009 was \$102,692, as opposed to \$86,081 in Cave Creek), and as a place fiercely protective of its image that had taken a zero-tolerance stance toward day laborers. In turn, Cave Creek emerged as a gathering place for laborers in northern Maricopa County. According to both my interviewees and Cave Creek town council minutes, many proponents of the ordinances desired for Cave Creek to adopt a similar stance to that of Carefree. Carefree thus served as a ‘model’ with which Cave Creek needed to keep up – in part in terms of its stance towards undocumented immigrants – or risk decline and damage to its reputation. As the town manager of Cave Creek mentioned to me, many of those opposed to the day labor ordinances were intensely concerned about the impact of the laborers on their property values, which reflects observations in Carpentersville as well.

### **Discussion and conclusion**

In this paper, I have argued that the prevalence of exclusionary local immigration policies in the suburban United States can be interpreted as a defense of the “suburban



ideal.” This suburban ideal is framed at two different levels. First, it represents a defense of a suburban “American Dream,” which encompasses American identity as well as the local stability and security of Americans and legal residents. Immigrants who assimilate to this vision of the “Dream” are welcome in the suburbs; those who do not become targets of anti-immigration policy activism. Second, it also reflects a defense of local place identity which is tied into the broader social, demographic, and economic contexts of the area.

Interestingly, the extent to which my sources pointed to the two different components of the suburban ideal varied based upon their opinion of the immigration ordinances. Proponents of the exclusionary ordinances spoke more of a suburban ideal represented by the “American Dream,” of which their community was a part. Threats to the local community were presented as threats to the United States at large, and immigrant assimilation and legality were identified as key variables that distinguished between desirable and undesirable immigrants. Opponents of the immigration ordinances, however, placed these responses firmly within their *local* contexts, rather than interpreting them through a national lens. They observed that such local immigration policies were acutely tied into specific experiences of these suburbs, such as population growth and fiscal strains in Manassas/Prince William, perceptions of decline amidst the Hispanicization of Carpentersville’s east side, and anxieties about the preservation of Cave Creek’s unique identity. Taken together, the claims of both

proponents and opponents suggest that immigrants were scapegoated as the cause of these local problems, with proponents claiming that these local conflicts exemplify how the American nation itself (represented by an idealized suburban community) is under threat from undocumented immigrants.

Given the changing demographic context of US suburbia, these findings suggest that this assertion of the suburban ideal in the wake of demographic change may lead to future cultural clashes between established and new suburban populations. Current demographic trends suggest that suburbs will continue to transition away from the traditional white, middle-class model. For example, recent results from Census 2010 suggest that over one third of new suburbanites in the 2000s were of Hispanic origin, whereas whites only constituted 20 percent of the new suburban population (Tavernise and Gebeloff 2010). In the wake of metropolitan economic restructuring, it is also likely that the devalorization of many suburbs will continue. Hanlon, Short, and Vicino (2010) observe that contemporary urban development has largely been characterized by two prevailing trends: sprawl and investment in affluent suburbs on the urban periphery, and urban revitalization and gentrification in central city cores. Many suburbs geographically located in between these two areas of growth have declined, and are caught in a “policy blindspot” as they are ineligible for many urban revitalization programs for blighted inner-city areas. Further, the fragmented municipal geography

that characterizes many US metropolitan areas leaves many suburbs incapable of handing economic challenges on their own.

Part of the reason Manassas and Carpentersville were attractive to immigrants was because of the presence of affordable housing; however, it is important to note that while immigrants settled in the lower-income parts of these communities, they largely did not work there, instead working in construction or other service industries for higher-income neighborhoods or in wealthier suburbs. In both Manassas and Carpentersville, my contacts acknowledged that it was possible for residents of wealthier neighborhoods to have little to do with immigrants; similarly, in Cave Creek, the day labor center attracted some patrons from Carefree, who could not hire in their own town due to its highly exclusionary stance against day labor. In turn, the perceived costs and benefits of immigration were unevenly distributed. While the economic growth in nearby affluent areas was facilitated in part by immigrant labor, the presence and behaviors of these immigrants in certain neighborhoods clashed with resident spatial imaginaries of what their communities should look like.

Future research will need to pay close attention to this growing disparity between prosperous and struggling suburbs, and the implications of this divide for the social health of suburban communities in the United States. For example, the evidence provided in this paper suggests that some suburban residents in high-immigration areas believe strongly that their idealized community is one where undocumented immigrants

(and by proxy poor Latinos) are not present. In turn, it is possible that such exclusionary stances may lead to entrenched patterns of segregation within the suburban US. While suburbia as a whole in the United States is undoubtedly becoming more diverse, scholars will need to pay close attention to whether this growing diversity is leading to actual integration within communities or new patterns of “white flight” from diversifying areas. As these suburbs change, it will be similarly important to examine the changing cultural significance of the American suburb. As I have shown in this paper, a suburban ideal of a white, middle-class, nationally American suburbia persists; however, given that fewer and fewer suburbs actually reflect this ideal demographically, it is possible that the ideal will be destabilized. Finally, I do not examine explicitly in this paper the demographic and economic consequences of suburban exclusionary immigration ordinances. My conversations with local officials in these suburbs, however, suggest that this will be an important topic for both social science and policy research.

While these exclusionary policies were framed in part as attempts to promote economic stability, they appear in some cases to have had an undesired effect. In each of the three suburbs, the policy debates had negative financial consequences. Manassas and Cave Creek, for example, each had to pay substantial settlements after their policies were found unconstitutional. More broadly, however, opponents of the immigration ordinances as well as local officials told me of the damage done to the

cities' reputations by the local immigration policy debates. Predictably, the policy positions motivated many immigrants and Latino residents to leave, which in turn contributed to the high foreclosure rates in these areas. The policies also branded these places as unwelcoming and racist more generally, which presented challenges to local officials in attracting new businesses. In turn, local officials raised concerns that economic development would pass over these communities, as firms would be wary of investing in areas with reputations as xenophobic. As such, while the settlement of immigrants in new suburban destinations clearly presents many social and cultural challenges, the ultimate health of these suburban communities will depend on their ability to find inclusive ways to respond to demographic change and integrate these new populations.

## CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

In this dissertation, I have sought to provide a geographical basis for understanding the emergence of local policy responses to immigration across the United States. As I show in Chapter 2, geography itself is a significant independent variable in shaping the nature of these local policies, as exclusionary policies are disproportionately found in the US South and in suburbs as opposed to central cities. Chapter 3 demonstrates that it is not simply geographic location that influences local policy responses, but that there are other geographies and spatialities that play a role in local immigration policy responses. Multi-scalar policy hierarchies enable or constrain the abilities of local governments to respond to immigration; localities form topological nodes in networks that activist organizations have used to advance their immigration policy agendas; and local place-based identities influence the types of local policy responses. This “politics of place” is significant in Chapter 4, as some suburbs have used exclusionary policies as a way to defend a mythical “suburban ideal.” This “ideal,” however, is itself multi-scalar; it refers not only to an “American Dream” that privileges cultural homogeneity and immigrant legality, but also represents local identities that are currently being reshaped and challenged by metropolitan growth and change.

This project thus contributes to the existing literature on local immigration policies by situating local responses within the national landscape of these policies. To this point, much of the literature on local immigration policies has focused on specific

case studies, giving detailed accounts of how local social and political characteristics have led to the adoption of these policies. While place-specific conditions are certainly important in influencing local immigration policy implementation, my quantitative and comparative qualitative analyses demonstrate that there exist many similarities between localities considering/implementing these policies, even in geographically disparate parts of the United States. For example, while Manassas, Carpentersville, and Cave Creek are quite different in many ways, proponents of exclusionary policies in each suburb invoked an idealized image of suburban space to justify their anti-immigration stances. A distinct place identity was also present in the inclusive suburbs of Takoma Park and Evanston, as each suburb passed “nuclear-free zone” resolutions and sanctuary resolutions in the 1980s. Additionally, my comparative approach demonstrates how diverse networks and hierarchies of political actors have sought to influence local immigration policies. None of the six local immigration policy debates were self-contained; rather, extralocal actors attempted to influence the policy positions of all six localities, with some actors (e.g. FAIR) common to multiple suburbs. An approach rooted in a single case study may neglect to fully address that these responses are not unique, but rather are situated within a complex network of local immigration policies.

Further, while the existing literature has largely considered inclusive and exclusionary policies as analytically distinct, this dissertation demonstrates the

importance of analyzing both types of responses as part of a larger phenomenon of local immigration policy. For example, the quantitative analyses in this dissertation show that both types of responses are related to the geography of immigration in the US; the nature of the response, however, is closely linked to the other social and demographic characteristics of the locality. The qualitative portion of Chapter 2 shows that inclusive and exclusionary localities sometimes employ the exact same language to justify their policy positions; in this instance, both Takoma Park and Prince William County officials wrote of the need to protect the “health, safety, and welfare” of their residents. While Takoma Park addressed this through immigrant inclusion, however, Prince William proposed exclusionary policies to accomplish this goal. Further, as I suggest in Chapter 3, both inclusive and exclusionary suburbs in the study engaged in a politics of scale in very similar ways, adopting policies and resolutions designed to critique the immigration policy position of the federal government. Of course, the content of these ordinances and resolutions differed tremendously, as exclusionary localities felt that federal policy was too lax, whereas inclusive localities argued that it was overly strict. As such, while my analysis suggests that exclusionary and inclusive localities are in many ways very different kinds of places, the political strategies they engage in demonstrate some similarities, even though they are quite distinct in intent.

My project also demonstrates the value of multi-methods approaches in human geography research. In employing a multi-stage and multi-method research design, I



have intended to use quantitative and qualitative methods in complementary ways, in part to help fill in some of the gaps present in each part of the study. For example, one of the major findings of Chapter 2 was that exclusionary policies tend to be found in areas of rapid foreign-born growth. As such, these regression models may not have predicted the presence of such a policy in Cave Creek, whose immigrant population did not grow significantly in the 2000s as measured by the Census. However, as the qualitative studies make clear, Cave Creek *did* experience a large influx of immigrants; however, these immigrants generally did not live in the town or lived in informal settlements, making them largely invisible to Census enumerators. Further, while the findings of Chapter 2 suggest that socio-demographic characteristics of localities are important in understanding local policy responses to immigration, Chapter 3 shows that such ordinances are not simply influenced by locality specific characteristics, but also by the regulatory frames of other scales of government, and extralocal actors who have sought to use localities as arenas to push a particular immigration policy agenda.

Further, I observed the importance of a multi-methods approach firsthand over the course of my research. When I departed in 2009 for my field visits to the six suburbs, my preliminary quantitative analyses already had helped me formulate research questions to further investigate in the field. In turn, my interviews provided important context to my quantitative findings by showing how they had practical significance. For example, local residents and officials spoke candidly about how the

rapid influx of immigrants to some areas provoked negative responses from local residents unaccustomed to the presence of these populations. Similarly, my qualitative researched helped strengthen the quantitative portion of this dissertation project. During my field visits, I was struck by how many interviewees linked the type of local immigration policy response (inclusive or exclusionary) with the conservative or progressive leanings of the locality. At the time, I did not have a variable in the regression models measuring political affiliation; however, my interviews convinced me of the importance of including such a variable.

Thus this project demonstrates how quantitative and qualitative methodologies in geography can be used in tandem, in order to contextualize the findings of one approach or generate new hypotheses to be investigated using a complementary methodology. It contributes to a growing literature within geography that explicitly stresses the value of mixed-methods and multi-methods approaches, despite a longstanding tension between quantitative and qualitative methods within the discipline. This literature rejects assumptions that quantitative methods are necessarily epistemologically positivist, and in turn fundamentally at odds with critical theory and social justice (Ellis 2009; Bergmann et al. 2009; Kwan and Schwanen 2009).

Admittedly, multi-methods research is not without its drawbacks. Wyly (2009), for example, reflects on the tremendous effort, time, and resources necessary for scholars to master the myriad theories and methods employed in both qualitative and

quantitative geography. He follows, “if we are not careful, radical openness can permit fragmented, shallow engagements that leave us equally incompetent in everything” (2009, 319), which might serve as a warning to individual scholars considering multi-methods approaches. In my approach, I selectively chose quantitative and qualitative methodologies that were practically feasible for an individual researcher to accomplish, and could directly complement one another by addressing different factors underlying local immigration policy implementation. Further, I was fortunate to receive consistent grant funding throughout the duration of the research project, giving me the necessary time to both learn the required quantitative and qualitative methods and carry out each component of the research project. Although I admit that this might not be feasible for all researchers, the utility of multi-methods research demonstrated in this dissertation suggests the potential for productive collaborations between quantitative and qualitative geographers. Such research could employ methods more suited to larger-scale analyses, such as survey research or ethnography.

### **Implications of the study and directions for future research**

By the time I was conducting my qualitative field research in 2009, the politics of immigration faded from immediate significance in some of the localities in this study. In Cave Creek, for example, all of my interviewees told me that day labor was no longer an

issue in the town given the near-absence of laborers, which they attributed in large part to the recession, which has diminished the demand for suburban construction in the area. Similarly, Carpentersville's debates were so rancorous that the current village leadership wants nothing to do with the immigration issue, even though the principal opponents of the IIRA ordinance on the village board were voted out of office in early 2009. In all six of the case study suburbs, in fact, local officials mentioned to me that residents were far more concerned with maintaining local economic stability in the wake of the recession rather than addressing immigration issues, even in localities that still had immigration ordinances in force.

For example, I have written in this dissertation of the activist organization Help Save Manassas, which played an influential role in pushing both Manassas and Prince William County to implement exclusionary ordinances. I planned my field visit to Manassas around one of HSM's monthly meetings, so I could conduct some participant observation; however, when I arrived, I learned the meeting had been canceled. Since then, HSM no longer posts meeting announcements on its website, and no longer publishes its newsletter (which has been a rich source of information for this dissertation). Greg Letiecq, the founder of HSM, still publishes actively on his popular blog, Black Velvet Bruce Li; however, he has since branched out to a variety of political topics aside from immigration.

In some circumstances, however, it appears that the local politics of immigration has not disappeared; rather, it has shifted scales, which points to the continued relevance of this research project. As I discuss in Chapter 3, Chandler's mayor supported a change in the city's immigration policy both to get in line with the upcoming adoption of Arizona's SB 1070 immigration bill and to avoid further criticism from state officials about its policy, which is implicitly embedded in SB 1070. In fact, as the mayor mentioned, he felt that the directive in SB 1070 prohibiting "limited cooperation" laws like that of Chandler was motivated in part by the city's policy. Virginia has also had a dialogue between local and state policy makers in recent months. Corey Stewart, the Chair of Prince William County's Board of County Supervisors, fashioned himself during the county's immigration debate as a political figurehead in favor of a local restrictive immigration policy. However, during the period when I was conducting research in 2009, Stewart had backed off this stance, preferring instead to focus on the economic recession that had wracked the county. However, after Arizona's passage of SB 1070 in early 2010, Stewart was emboldened and decided to take his case for immigration enforcement to the Virginia state government. Citing Prince William County as a successful example of local immigration enforcement, Stewart succeeded in influencing the Virginia House to introduce and pass a slate of immigration enforcement measures; however, these bills did fail in the Senate.

In Chapter 3, I wrote of the importance of policy transfer/mobility based on policy “models” like Hazleton, Pennsylvania’s IIRA ordinance. This policy model was particularly important in Illinois, as the IIRA ordinance introduced by Carpentersville trustees was a near-copy of Hazleton’s ordinance, and Evanston’s sanctuary policy was introduced in part as a statement designed to oppose IIRA ordinances. The aforementioned examples from Arizona demonstrate how local immigration policies are currently serving as models that are influencing *state policy* rather than simply other municipalities. I do not mean to overstate the importance of Chandler and Prince William in these instances. However, it is important to take these local policies into account, given that the state-level immigration enforcement laws considered in Virginia and passed in Arizona were in part influenced by this local politics of immigration. Prince William/Manassas, for example, shows how a policy model developed by an anti-immigration activist organization (FAIR) can become realized at the local level and ultimately helps inform state policy. Given that a variety of other states have considered Arizona-style immigration laws as well in the past year (e.g. Georgia, Alabama), local immigration policies and the political movements behind them do have the potential to have impacts that are much broader than those felt within their local boundaries.

These multi-scalar dimensions of local immigration policies suggest productive directions for future research. Clearly, as I discuss in this dissertation, counties have

been important sites for the implementation and contestation of local immigration policies, as exemplified by Maricopa County in Arizona and Prince William County in Virginia. However, my analysis of county-level politics in this dissertation has largely been secondary, as I opted to not include counties in the quantitative analyses in Chapter 2, and focused on municipal politics in Chapters 3 and 4. A more in-depth quantitative analysis might incorporate counties into these regression models, in order to understand how responses to immigration vary across scales. In fact, counties appear to be significantly more likely than cities to consider or implement exclusionary policies than municipalities. 88 percent of the counties in my ordinance database were exclusionary, as opposed to 69 percent of municipalities – a gap that is statistically significant. Additionally, in a national survey of local law enforcement officials, Varsanyi et al. (2010) found that county sheriffs were more likely to approve of local immigration enforcement than city police chiefs. Further regression analysis could explicitly examine whether this city/county divide is statistically robust.

The analysis detailed in this dissertation has admittedly been metropolitan in focus. The methodological decision in Chapter 2 to include recent ACS demographic estimates necessitated the removal of many rural municipalities from the quantitative analyses; further, I carried out all of the qualitative analyses within metropolitan areas. Several of the most prominent conflicts around local immigration policy have taken place in rural areas, however, including the IIRA ordinances approved in Hazleton and

Fremont, Nebraska, to name just two examples. Given that Census 2010 and nationally comprehensive ACS data are now available, however, an updated quantitative analysis could fully account for the local politics of immigration in rural areas. Further, I have written at length in this dissertation of the importance of a politics of place to local immigration policy debates, with a focus on the “suburban ideal” as detailed in Chapter 4. However, it is possible that different types of socio-spatial identities guide local policy responses to immigration in rural areas, which would be in line with the observations of Fennelly and Federico (2008) and Leitner (2011) in their research on attitudes towards immigrants in rural America. As such, follow-up qualitative and quantitative studies of local immigration policies in rural areas could provide a fuller account of how local responses to immigration vary geographically within the United States.

2010 Census results, however, suggest that the suburbs will remain an important site for analysis of conflicts around demographic change. Latino and African-American populations are growing rapidly in suburbs across the United States, particularly in the US South. As a recent analysis by the New York Times suggested, Latinos accounted for over one third of new suburbanites since 2000 (Tavernise and Gebeloff 2010). Whites, long associated with suburbanization, only accounted for 20 percent; further, some evidence has suggested that whites are instead returning to a select number of central cities (Frey 2010). While conflicts around immigration have tended to be concentrated



in a select number of areas where immigrants have clustered (which is supported by the analysis in this dissertation), widespread demographic change within the suburbs has the potential to lead to further cultural clashes.

As I learned in my interviews, these political conflicts can have devastating impacts on local immigrant populations and the social health of communities. The accounts detailed by my interviewees were supported by a recent University of Virginia study on the impacts of Prince William County's immigration policy, which found that Latino population growth basically stopped post-2007, and estimated that thousands of Latino undocumented immigrants left the county (Guterbock et al. 2010). While it is difficult to ascertain the true impetus for this demographic reversal given the onset of the recent great recession, qualitative evidence from both this study and my own study suggests that the exclusionary local immigration policies and local immigration enforcement did play a role in influencing Latinos to leave. Further, the study found that Latino residents of the County became much less trusting in local government and were less likely to perceive Prince William as a place that affords them a high quality of life (Guterbock et al. 2010).

In turn, it appears as though negotiations of cultural difference and cohesion in a rapidly-changing United States will increasingly take place in the suburbs. However, as I discuss in this study, exclusionary responses are not the inevitable outcome of increased immigration and demographic change. Localities like Takoma Park and Evanston have

provided models for successfully integrating immigrant populations through local policy, and while Chandler's policy was ultimately rescinded in 2010, local officials spoke to me about the positive impacts the policy had on the relationship between the city and its immigrant population during the period when it was in effect. As one city council member in Takoma Park told me, the city functions as a venue for the consideration and implementation of progressive local policies that may have little chance of gaining traction at the national level. However, as the example of Prince William illustrates, such policies do have the potential of taking on greater political significance. In turn, given the contemporary dynamism of America's immigrant geographies, it will be of significant importance to give close attention to the new ways in which immigrant integration and immigration policy is negotiated and contested at national and state levels as well as in a diverse set of local communities.

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