Local Policy Responses to Immigration in the United States

by Kyle Walker

New immigrant populations are growing rapidly across the United States, not only in established urban areas, but also in newly emerging urban gateways, suburbs, exurbs, and rural areas that previously have not experienced large numbers of recent immigrants. Local responses to new immigrants have varied across the country as hundreds of localities have considered or enacted local policies to address immigration issues in their communities. Some local governments, including the Cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul, have responded in inclusive ways to both documented and undocumented immigrants—by granting local rights to immigrant populations or by limiting the role of local officials in immigration enforcement. Other localities have responded much more unfavorably—by considering or enacting policies designed to drive out undocumented immigrants or enforce immigration law at the local level.

This article provides an overview of the different local policy responses to immigration and the motivations behind these policy responses. I also consider the impacts of these policies, and discuss how communities in the Twin Cities metropolitan area fit within the national context. The research upon which this article is based was supported in part through a New Initiatives grant from CURA. Additional funding was provided by a Doctoral Dissertation Research Improvement Grant from the National Science Foundation and a Thesis Research Grant from the University of Minnesota Graduate School.

Methodology

I conducted field research for this project in 2009 in the Chicago, Washington, D.C., and Phoenix metropolitan areas, each of which represents a different immigrant gateway type as defined by Audrey Singer of the Brookings Institution. In each metropolitan area, I studied in detail two suburban communities that had considered or

1 Chicago is representative of a “continuous” immigrant gateway, in which immigration levels remained consistently high throughout the twentieth century; Washington is an “emerging” immigrant gateway, in which most immigration to the region took place during the last 20–30 years; and Phoenix is a “re-emerging” gateway, in which immigration levels were high at the beginning of the twentieth century, leveled off, and increased again rapidly after 1980. See A. Singer, The Rise of New Immigrant Gateways (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution, 2004).
enacted immigration policies at the local level—one community characterized by an inclusive immigration policy and one by an exclusionary policy. Field sites were: Evanston, Illinois, and Carpentersville, Illinois (Chicago area); Takoma Park, Maryland, and Manassas, Virginia (Washington, D.C. area); and Chandler, Arizona, and Cave Creek, Arizona (Phoenix area) (Figure 1). In each suburb, I conducted a series of interviews with local government officials, city employees, law enforcement officials, immigration advocates, and activists who had mobilized on either side of the local immigration debate. During the interviews, I asked questions designed to elicit responses about the motivations that undergirded these local policy responses in an effort to understand why each locality responded as it did. For each community, I also collected archival materials such as ordinances, policy documents, and city-council minutes that summarized the immigration debates. Finally, to situate the Twin Cities metropolitan area within this national context, I conducted a series of interviews with Twin Cities metropolitan area immigration advocates and policy experts, as well as local officials in various Twin Cities communities, to understand how this area’s municipalities have responded to immigration.

Exclusionary Immigration Policies

Dozens of U.S. localities have attracted headlines in recent years for their efforts to drive away undocumented immigrants through the implementation of local ordinances or policies. So-called Illegal Immigration Relief Act ordinances, which generally include a slate of policies designed to deter the settlement of undocumented immigrants, have garnered considerable attention. In 2006, Village Trustee Paul Humper introduced such a policy in Carpentersville, Illinois, modeled after an ordinance approved by Hazleton, Pennsylvania. The proposed ordinance would have made it illegal for local businesses to employ undocumented immigrants, barred the “harboring” of undocumented immigrants by fining landlords who enter into lease agreements with individuals who do not have proof of legal status, and directed local police to inquire into the immigration status of all persons. Similar ordinances in Hazleton and in Fremont, Nebraska, remain tied up in the courts.

The effort in Carpentersville to direct local police to check immigration status has been mirrored in dozens of other localities that have sought to involve local law enforcement in immigration matters. Often this reaction has taken the form of the 287(g) program, a federal-local partnership that trains local law enforcement officials to check immigration status and begin deportation proceedings in some instances. As of August 2008, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement had reported 63 signed 287(g) agreements, most of which were with cities or counties. One such city is Manassas, Virginia, which in addition to its 287(g) agreement has specified its own immigration-enforcement policy to be followed by the Manassas Police Department. Among other stipulations, this policy includes the following directives: “Police officers will inquire into the immigration status of all persons who are under physical custodial arrest for a violation of state law ... Police officers retain discretion to inquire into immigration status prior to a physical custodial arrest.”

Prior to directing police to engage in immigration enforcement, the Manassas City Council employed a different type of strategy to address immigration issues. In late 2005, the council approved an ordinance that modified the definition of “family” in the city code to include only immediate family members (grandparents, parents, and children). Local officials stated that the ordinance was originally proposed to address overcrowding of housing units in Manassas, which they attributed in part to the presence of illegal

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2 In April 2010, Arizona Governor Jan Brewer signed into law Senate Bill 1070, which included a number of measures targeting undocumented immigrants. The most contentious part of the bill directs local police to inquire into immigration status of individuals “where reasonable suspicion exists that the person is an alien who is unlawfully present in the United States.” This law passed after I had conducted my research in Arizona. I address the impact of the law on Chandler, Arizona, later in this article.

3 U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement is the largest branch of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

immigrants. Enforcement of the ordinance disproportionately impacted the local Latino population, and Manassas ultimately withdrew the ordinance after a Washington-area human-rights firm sued the City on behalf of several affected Manassas residents, all legal residents or native-born U.S. citizens.

Manassas’s actions are representative of another type of policy response that localities have used to target undocumented immigrants. Such ordinances regulate activities that undocumented immigrants are perceived to be involved in, without naming immigrants directly as their target. However, in debates around these policies, illegal immigration—rather than the specific behavior itself—frequently emerges as the key issue. In Cave Creek, Arizona, the town council approved two ordinances in 2007 designed to limit the ability of day laborers—many of whom were congregating along Cave Creek Road, the main commercial strip in the town—to seek work. The town council passed an anti-solicitation ordinance and an anti-loitering ordinance, yet framed the debate on these policies in terms of the immigration issue. For example, in a public forum on day laborers at the June 18, 2007, town council meeting, residents’ concerns about day laborers were framed not in terms of safety, but rather in terms of the undesirability of illegal immigrants in Cave Creek. After the ordinances were passed in September 2007, they prompted a successful lawsuit to overturn them, brought by the American Civil Liberties Union of Arizona. Nonetheless, these policies demonstrate how communities have used local policy to target undocumented immigrants without directly engaging in immigration enforcement.

Inclusive Immigration Policies
In contrast to the communities described above, other localities have pursued entirely different policy responses to immigration, acting instead to incorporate immigrants into their communities regardless of legal status. An example is the “sanctuary” policy in place in Takoma Park, Maryland. In the 1980s, cities enacted sanctuary policies to protect refugees who, at the time, could not obtain official refugee status from the U.S. government. Takoma Park originally approved such a policy in 1985 to respond to an influx of refugees from El Salvador and Guatemala. Currently, sanctuary policies refer more broadly to the status of undocumented immigrants rather than just refugees, as cities like Takoma Park have updated their policies to more accurately reflect the current political and immigration climate. The updated Takoma Park policy, passed in 2007, declares that no city official may inquire into, or discriminate based upon, the legal status of individuals within the city.

Many other localities with similar policies eschew the “sanctuary” label, preferring instead to call their policies “separation ordinances” or to simply reference them as policies that limit the role of local officials in immigration enforcement. The City of Chandler, Arizona, had such a policy in place from 1999 to early 2010. This policy, summarized in the Chandler Police Department’s General Order E-17, stipulated that “Officers … shall not do any of the following: Stop, detain, or interrogate persons for the purpose of determining immigration status; arrest a person when the only violation is an infraction of immigration law; contact U.S. Borders and Customs Protection [USBCP] for the sole purpose of interpreting; transport USBCP prisoners, except in life-threatening situations.” The intent of Chandler’s policy was to provide a clear distinction between the roles of local police officers and federal immigration officials. Instead of using a separation ordinance, a general order issued by the police department may serve as a more politically palatable way to accomplish the goals of a sanctuary ordinance. For example, after the city council of Evanston, Illinois, failed to pass a sanctuary policy in early 2008, the police department issued a general order clarifying that Evanston police would not engage in immigration policing.

Other localities have taken steps to integrate immigrants, regardless of legal status, by granting them local rights. For example, Evanston accepts the Mexican matrícula consular card as a valid form of identification, allowing immigrants to access local services such as libraries and banking. Takoma Park has also sought to incorporate undocumented immigrants politically by allowing all city residents to register to vote in local elections, regardless of legal status. The policy, which went into effect in 1992, established a separate voter roll for noncitizens managed by the city clerk, allowing them to vote in Takoma Park elections. To date, this type of integrative policy is very rare; five other Maryland localities and three in Massachusetts have approved similar policies, and Chicago allows noncitizens to vote in school board elections.5

5 The matrícula consular card is an identification card that expatriate Mexicans can obtain from the Mexican government. Locally, Minneapolis and St. Paul also accept the card as a valid form of identification.
Factors Driving the Implementation of Local Immigration Policies

In this section, I present possible reasons why policy responses to immigration at the local level vary so widely, even among communities in the same metropolitan area.

Demographic Changes. Other research has found a strong link between the size of the foreign-born population and the type of local immigration-policy response. Localities with larger immigrant populations are more likely to pursue immigration policies; within this group, localities with fast-growing immigrant populations tend to react with exclusionary measures.6 At their most extreme, local activists have used inflammatory rhetoric to explain the demographic changes that have prompted policy responses to immigration. In a 2007 newsletter of the activist organization Help Save Manassas, president Greg Letiecq wrote, “Our county [Prince William County, Virginia, which surrounds Manassas] has been under assault from the tens, if not hundreds of thousands of illegal aliens who have taken advantage of our lax enforcement of the law at the federal, state, and local levels.” Although the statistics Letiecq cites are clearly exaggerated, Manassas has experienced significant demographic changes during the past two decades. The city has experienced a net population growth of approximately 8,000 residents since 1990; during the same period, the Hispanic population grew from approximately 2,100 to 8,400, and the immigrant population grew from approximately 2,100 to 8,400.7 Local officials I interviewed frequently cited how the rapid demographic changes led to a response from the city as they began to hear complaints from residents about overcrowding and crime, which these residents attributed to an influx of undocumented immigrants. During the period prior to the introduction of its exclusionary immigration ordinance, Carpentersville experienced similar demographic changes. In 1990, Carpentersville’s population was approximately 10% foreign-born and 16% Hispanic. However, by the time Carpentersville considered its ordinance, these figures had risen to 35% and 49%, respectively.

Exclusionary policies, however, are not the inevitable result of demographic change. In Takoma Park, the influx of Central Americans from El Salvador and Guatemala during the 1980s prompted the passage of the city’s original sanctuary policy. The 1985 resolution reads, “approximately 20,000 Salvadoran and Guatemalan refugees have sought refuge in Takoma Park and neighboring Maryland communities and are actively contributing to the well-being of our city.” In 1988, Evanston, Illinois, passed

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7 The recent demographic figures reflect estimates from the 2005–2007 American Community Survey, which represent the demographic context under which Manassas and Carpentersville debated their policies. In terms of percentages, in 1990 Manassas had a total population of 27,957, of which 6% were Hispanic and 8% were foreign-born. By the mid-1990s, the city’s population was 36,133, of which 26% were Hispanic and 23% were foreign-born.
a similar sanctuary resolution, and also began considering ways to incorporate its immigrant population as immigrants from Latin America and the Caribbean began to arrive in the city during the 1990s. Former alderman Edmund Moran spoke about his proposal for the creation of a Latino-outreach worker position in the city of Evanston to engage with the growing immigrant population. Likewise, Evanston’s proposed 2008 immigration policy was motivated in part by activists’ observations of the challenges immigrants faced in the city.

Local Political Culture. A common theme that emerged from my interviews was the role of local political context in determining immigration-policy responses. In Manassas, nearly all of the interviewees I spoke with mentioned the role that the area’s conservative political identity has played in influencing its response to immigration. One interviewee remarked that Manassas “is still fighting the Civil War.” At the time that Manassas approved its immigration policies, one Independent sat on the Manassas City Council; the rest of the council, as well as the mayor, were Republican. Thus, both the political identity and power structure of Manassas are conservative, which in part helps explain the types of exclusionary immigration policies Manassas has adopted. Although interviewees drew the strongest link in Manassas, in both Carpentersville and Cave Creek (the other suburbs I studied that pursued exclusionary policies), interviewees also attributed the nature of local responses to immigration in part to the conservatism of these areas.

Similarly, residents and officials in Takoma Park and Evanston linked their local inclusive immigration-policy responses with the suburbs’ progressive political identities. One Takoma Park official called the city “one of the most liberal cities in the nation,” and others spoke of the central role that political progressivism plays in Takoma Park’s identity. This identity has had a significant impact on local policy toward immigrants. For example, when considering the introduction of its resolution to allow noncitizen voting, the Takoma Park Elections Task Force concluded, “Based upon … the general sense that it would be consistent with Takoma Park’s historic commitment to activist democracy and its status as a sanctuary city, the Task Force supports the concept of allowing all residents of Takoma Park, regardless of citizenship, to vote in city elections.” In Evanston, the decision to propose a sanctuary policy in early 2008 was made on similar grounds. Local activist Rachel Heuman, an Evanston resident with whom I spoke and one of the principal architects of the policy, commented during a Human Services Committee meeting on the issue:

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.

Heuman viewed Evanston’s policy proposal as consistent with the political character of the city, and as a response to other communities like Carpentersville that had taken a different stance on immigration.

In Chandler, Arizona, the political context that informed the city’s stance on immigration matters was entirely different. In 1997, the Chandler Police Department, in collaboration with the Immigration and Naturalization Service (as U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement was known then), conducted a five-day immigration-enforcement operation. Although the stated intent of the operation was to arrest individuals illegally residing in the United States, there were numerous accounts of racial profiling, with some Chandler residents alleging that they were targeted simply because of their outward appearance. As part of the raids, many U.S. citizens and legal U.S. residents were detained by police. These events produced a substantial backlash from the local Latino community, which referred to the enforcement action as the “Chandler Roundup” to reflect how the Latino community was treated. Political pressure from Latino activists led Chandler to pursue a variety of measures to ensure that the events of 1997 would not be repeated. Soon afterward, the mayor established a Human Relations Commission and the police department issued its general order stipulating that local police are not to engage in immigration policing.

Individual Activists. Chandler’s response following the 1997 immigration-enforcement actions demonstrates how both local political events and the concerted efforts of local activists can influence local immigration-policy responses. In fact, numerous interviewees attributed their community’s local immigration policies to efforts from local activists or politicians, sometimes pointing to specific individuals as the catalysts for the policies. Such was the case in Cave Creek, Arizona, which in 2007 passed the two ordinances targeting day laborers that were described above. Several interviewees in Cave Creek cited the influence of Don Sorochy, the editor of the local newspaper The Sonoran News, in pushing the town council to take action against day laborers who congregated in the town.

Before the ordinances were passed, the Good Shepherd of the Hills Episcopal Church ran a day-labor center out of its parking lot, which assisted laborers in finding employment and helped keep them off Cave Creek Road, the sidewalk-free main commercial strip in the town. Sorochy, frustrated by what he saw as the church’s facilitation of illegal activity, spent three hours per day taking photos of the automobiles of those who hired day laborers, then published the photos in his newspaper. Tensions in the town were further inflamed when a local motorcycle club called the American Freedom Riders arrived in Cave Creek and harassed individuals at the Good Shepherd day-labor center. According to Cave Creek Mayor Vincent Francia, the political climate around day laborers and immigration became so charged that he felt he and the town council had to take action. Although Sorochy did not orchestrate the antiloitering and antisolicitation ordinances that the city ultimately passed, his actions helped to create an environment that facilitated their passage. The central role of individual activists is not limited to Cave Creek; in Manassas, Help Save Manassas president Greg Letiecq exerted considerable influence through both his organization and his popular blog. In turn, some of my contacts in Manassas pointed to Letiecq as the catalyst for the backlash against undocumented immigration that took place in the area.
Impacts of Local Policy Responses to Immigration

Local policy responses to immigration have had considerable impact in some municipalities. In Manassas and Prince William County (which surrounds Manassas and which has implemented similar exclusionary policies), members of the local immigrant community and their allies organized a boycott of local businesses. The reaction of the Manassas immigrant community is exemplified by the Liberty Wall, which sat at an intersection between Manassas’s historic Old Town district and the Georgetown South neighborhood where a large proportion of the local immigrant population lives.

Both advocates of Manassas’s exclusionary immigration policies and those who opposed the policies acknowledge that many immigrants have departed the city since the policies were debated. A video on the Help Save Manassas website proclaims, “Take ownership of your government ... Get involved, get organized. We did, and saved our community from many of the effects of illegal immigration.” Manassas city officials I interviewed observed that immigrants have been leaving the city, although they were unsure whether the decline in the immigrant population was due to Manassas’s policies or to the current economic recession, which has hit Manassas and Prince William County particularly hard. However, immigration advocates in Manassas who I interviewed explained that they felt that a climate of fear perpetuated by local policy responses has certainly led immigrants to leave the area.

Local officials in Manassas and Cave Creek who I interviewed made similar observations about the impact of their local policy responses to immigration. Both are outer-ring suburbs that have been impacted by the recession, and many immigrants have departed these cities even though exclusionary policies were never enforced in either community. Reverend Antonio Cabello, rector at the Iglesia San Esteban Martir in Carpentersville, observed that large numbers of both documented and undocumented immigrants have left the village, which heavily impacted attendance at his parish. Similarly, the day-labor center at Good Shepherd of the Hills in Cave Creek is now defunct, and day laborers no longer line Cave Creek Road.

In Takoma Park, local officials shared a recent anecdote to demonstrate the positive impacts of the city’s open immigration policy on the greater community. During the summer of 2009, a day laborer in Takoma Park observed two individuals committing an armed robbery of a dry cleaner in the city. The day laborer took down the robbers’ license plate number and contacted the police, who promptly arrested the offenders. Takoma Park police and city officials cited this as an example of how the positive relationship between the city and its immigrant community can have tangible public-safety benefits for the entire community. Similarly, Alberto Esparza, a Chandler resident who originally was one of the leaders of the organized response to the 1997 Chandler Roundup and who is now a key figure in the Chandler Latino community, commented that the city’s efforts to reach out to the immigrant population post-1997 have dramatically improved relationships between the city of Chandler, the Chandler Police Department, and the local immigrant community.

Although to a certain extent anti-immigration policies succeeded in driving away immigrants regardless of whether or not the policies were actually enforced, these types of policy responses may ultimately have more lasting effects. Manassas and Cave Creek were each sued as a result of their immigration-related policies, leading in both cases to a repeal of the policy and substantial settlement costs and legal fees. Furthermore, residents of Manassas and Carpentersville spoke about the damage that the local immigration debate has inflicted on their cities’ reputations. According to former Carpentersville Trustee Linda Ramirez Sliwinski, “[The ordinance proposal] has hurt us in talking to businesses ... [T]hey don’t want to come to Carpentersville” because businesses perceive the community as an unwelcoming place. Officials in Manassas made similar statements; for example, members of the Ku Klux Klan arrived in the city to distribute flyers after the policies were debated, contributing to negative perceptions of the community and further dampening future economic development.

In Chandler, Arizona, local officials and residents commented on how the city is still actively working to rebuild its reputation and bolster relationships with its immigrant community, both of which were damaged by the 1997 Chandler Roundup immigration-enforcement actions. However, the inclusive immigration-policy stance that Chandler adopted in the wake of the Roundup has proven to be politically untenable. Chandler’s policy was a frequent target of criticism from Arizona state legislators who favored immigration restrictions, and Chandler city officials commonly received calls from residents upset about the presence of perceived undocumented day laborers in the city. In February 2010, the Chandler City Council passed a resolution rescinding its immigration policy. Remarks by Chandler’s mayor at the city council meeting suggest that this action was in part prompted by the sustained
criticism Chandler had received from the state legislature. Two months later, Arizona Governor Jan Brewer signed the omnibus immigration bill SB 1070 into law, which among other stipulations directed local police to make inquiries into individuals’ immigration status, and prohibited cities in Arizona from enacting policies like the one that Chandler formerly had in place.

The Minnesota Context
In the Twin Cities metropolitan area, both Minneapolis and St. Paul have passed ordinances regarding the city’s stance on immigration matters. In 2003, Minneapolis passed a separation ordinance, originally sponsored by Councilmember Gary Schiff. The policy stipulates, “The city works cooperatively with Homeland Security, as it does with all state and federal agencies, but the city does not operate its programs for the purpose of enforcing federal immigration laws.” The ordinance further clarifies that city employees may only ask about immigration status when specifically required by law to do so, and that city police “shall not take any law enforcement action for the purpose of detecting undocumented persons, or to verify immigration status, including but not limited to questioning any person or persons about immigration status.”

Councilmember Schiff also authored an ordinance, which was passed in 2003, allowing the Mexican matrícula consular card to be accepted as a valid form of identification for immigrants to obtain city services. In 2004, St. Paul passed its own policy directing city employees and law enforcement officials to refrain from inquiring into immigration status under most circumstances.

Local officials and immigration advocates in Minneapolis and St. Paul described these policies as providing immigrants the opportunity to engage more fully in their communities. Heidi Quezada, legislative aide to Councilmember Schiff in Minneapolis, stated that the ordinances emerged out of a concern that undocumented immigrants were not reporting crime, and did not have opportunities to start businesses and fully participate in the local economy. As a result of the ordinances, she observed, immigrant businesses along Lake Street in the Ninth Ward have continued to thrive, and the relationship between the local immigrant community and the Minneapolis police has continued to improve. Similarly, former public relations officer Paul Schnell from the St. Paul Police Department observed that the city’s separation ordinance, which codified the department’s prior practices, has made it more likely for undocumented immigrants to contact the police. He noted that the ordinance also allows the police to focus on public safety specifically, rather than taking on additional responsibilities such as enforcing immigration law.

The immigration-policy stances of Minneapolis and St. Paul have been met with some resistance by state politicians. In 2004, Governor Tim Pawlenty wrote letters to the city council presidents of each city asking them to repeal their separation ordinances. In 2005, this issue came before the state legislature, as Representative Jim Knoblach (R–St. Cloud) authored a bill directing the two cities to repeal their ordinances. The bill passed in the House, 94–37, but did not pass in the Senate and thus did not become law. In early 2008, Governor Pawlenty issued an executive order directing Minnesota public-safety officials to enter into a cooperative agreement with U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, including training some law enforcement officers through the 287(g) agreement. He also signed an executive order requiring employers who do business with the State of Minnesota to conduct immigration-status checks for their employees.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, Governor Pawlenty’s policy proposals have not gained traction in Minneapolis and St. Paul. In both cities, inclusive immigration ordinances passed with little difficulty, and city officials cited few complaints from local residents about the policies. In part, the local situation reflects the national context discussed earlier in this article. Politically, the residents of Minneapolis and St. Paul are among the most left-leaning in the metropolitan area, so inclusive policies similar to those enacted in Takoma Park and Evanston reflect the local political character.

More fertile ground for the adoption of Governor Pawlenty’s proposals might be found in Twin Cities suburbs, where—much like Manassas and Carpentersville—conservative politics are more common and the immigrant population is growing much more rapidly. However, to date, no Twin Cities municipality has proposed or enforced an exclusionary immigration ordinance at the local level. In Brooklyn Park—which, according to the U.S. Census, had a net gain of more than 5,000 immigrants since 2000, the most of any city in Minnesota—the public officials I interviewed had little interest in pursuing local enforcement policies like those in Manassas, Carpentersville, or Cave Creek. Brooklyn Park Mayor Steve Lampi stated that he would not support an effort to involve Brooklyn Park police

Day laborers who seek employment wait in a 7-Eleven parking lot in Takoma Park, Maryland. Immigration advocates have praised Takoma Park for its welcoming stance toward immigrants, regardless of their legal status.
more closely in immigration enforcement. Similarly, Brooklyn Park Police Captain Jeff Ankerfelt told me that department policy is not to actively seek out undocumented immigrants, and explained that, although Brooklyn Park is not considered an official “shelter city,” the police department conducts itself accordingly. As with the public-safety officials in Chandler, Evanston, and Takoma Park, Ankerfelt spoke about the importance of trust and building relationships between local police and the immigrant community. In Blaine, where the immigrant population has grown more than 210% since 2000, Police Chief Chris Olson stated that immigration status is not something the department checks if the crime committed does not warrant it; rather, immigration status is best handled by federal authorities. In Chaska, where the immigrant population has more than doubled since 2000, Police Chief Scott Knight was quoted in a 2006 Star Tribune article as stating that Governor Pawlenty’s immigration-enforcement proposals amounted to a “politics of fear” and linked such practices with racial profiling.

Some recent events in the metropolitan area, however, resemble the kinds of local debates around immigration that have taken place elsewhere in the nation. In July 2010, the Twin Cities suburb of Lino Lakes passed a resolution declaring English the city’s official language. The resolution itself says nothing about immigration, and city leaders claim that their motivation for passing the policy was simply to cut costs associated with producing city documents in multiple languages. However, in several other U.S. jurisdictions, including Carpentersville, similar English-only resolutions accompanied other exclusionary policy proposals, and the arguments in favor of these policies directly engaged with the immigration issue. Furthermore, a Minnesota Public Radio report found that Lino Lakes officials had assistance in writing the resolution from a Virginia-based organization with ties to the Federation for American Immigration Reform, an organization that provided support for the exclusionary policies considered in Manassas and Carpentersville.8

Conclusion
In metropolitan areas across the United States, various localities have proposed or enacted local policies that either grant local rights to, or make their communities less hospitable for, undocumented immigrants. Such policies may engage directly with the immigration issue by directing police or other local officials to make or not make checking immigration status a matter of priority, or may target undocumented immigrants indirectly through city ordinances or code enforcement. The types of policies that have been proposed or enacted are strongly influenced by the character and political dynamics of the communities in which they are introduced; in Takoma Park, Evanston, and Chandler, inclusive policy responses were grounded in the distinct political identities and political histories of these communities, whereas in Manassas, Carpentersville, and Cave Creek, activists or politicians were able to pursue political agendas that culminated in exclusionary policies. In the Twin Cities metropolitan area, Minneapolis and St. Paul have separation ordinances in place that dictate that immigration status should not be a matter of city business, to the chagrin of Governor Pawlenty and some in the state legislature. Although officials in some high-immigration Twin Cities suburbs also indicated little interest in enforcing immigration law at the local level, recent events in Lino Lakes suggest that this debate could potentially accelerate in Minnesota. Further, at the state level, representative Steve Drazkowski (R–Mazeppa) introduced an immigration bill in May 2010 very similar to the one passed in Arizona in April.

Although interviews with activists and policy makers can reveal insights into the motivation behind particular policies, interview data on the impacts of these policies tend to be highly subjective. Regardless, in all localities with inclusive immigration policies, interviewees spoke about the ability of inclusive local policies to improve relationships between the city and its immigrant community, and thereby contribute to public-safety goals. In the suburbs with exclusionary policies, interviewees in all three localities had observed a decline in the local immigrant population in the wake of exclusionary immigration policy debates. However, the interviewees could not be certain about whether this decline was due to the local crackdown or to the economic recession, which heavily impacted all three communities. Perceptions of the policies’ impacts varied depending on the interviewees’ political position on the issue; advocates of the policies generally lauded them for reducing the undocumented immigrant population, whereas immigration advocates spoke of the “chilling effect” that the policies had on immigrants, making them less likely to report crimes and engage in public life.

These experiences provide lessons for other communities, such as those in the Twin Cities, that are currently experiencing demographic changes as a result of immigration. Demographic trends indicate that immigrant populations in the United States are growing the fastest not in central cities, which might be more welcoming of immigrants, but rather in suburbs and rapidly growing communities on the metropolitan fringe. Although exclusionary immigration policies may in fact be able to achieve their intent of reducing the local immigrant population to a certain extent, they also may result in long-lasting deleterious effects such as damaging the city’s reputation, which ultimately hinders economic development, or creating a climate of fear among the local immigrant population (both documented and undocumented), which can negatively impact public safety. Although communities transitioning from a primarily homogeneous demographic to a multicultural population face distinct challenges in addressing these changes, lessons from Illinois, Washington, D.C., and Arizona suggest the importance of forward-thinking policies that seek to build bridges between established residents and new immigrant populations.

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