

FEDERAL POLICY FEEDBACKS AND LOCAL RESPONSES TO IMMIGRANTS

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Abstract

How will increasingly restrictive federal immigration policies influence local government responses to immigrants? This paper examines how exogenous variation in exposure to accommodating and restrictive federal policies shapes local immigrant-serving practices. Drawing on an original survey of municipal leaders' responses to immigrants coupled with government administrative data, this paper finds that places more exposed to federal refugee resettlement implement more independent, local practices to accommodate immigrants, while places more exposed to county-level immigrant detention accommodate less, holding constant a broad range of potentially conflated factors. These federal policies generate powerful feedbacks that shape what local officials do and what they believe (Bloemraad 2006; Marschall, Rigby and Jenkins 2011). Federal policies frame local understandings of immigrants in ways that direct the trajectory of independent municipal responses. Recognizing the normative influence of federal policies on local responses to immigrants is particularly crucial at a time in which federal rhetoric and policies surrounding immigrants are moving toward greater restriction.

President Trump has introduced substantial changes in US immigration policies, even in the absence of federal legislative reform. In the early weeks of his presidency, Trump reinstated Secure Communities and 287(g), interior enforcement programs that devolve responsibilities to the local level. He likewise introduced a travel ban that halted refugee resettlement for a period, initiating a process that has decimated the U.S. refugee resettlement program. Beyond these two examples, Trump has ramped up the intensity of enforcement both in the interior and at the border, and coupled it with perpetual rhetoric about the dangers of immigration.

Trump's decidedly restrictive approach to federal immigration policy comes at a time when local governments are increasingly playing a substantial role in immigrant incorporation. Since the 1990s immigrants have dispersed beyond traditional gateways (Singer 2004; Marrow 2005; Waters and Jiménez 2005) such that, today, more than two-thirds of US cities greater than 50,000 are at least 10 percent foreign-born, and more than a third are at least 20 percent foreign-born (American Community Survey 2010-14). As other institutions, such as churches, unions, and parties, wane in influence (DeSipio 2001; Gerstle and Mollenkopf 2001; Jones-Correa 2005; Wong 2006), local governments have the potential to powerfully shape incorporation, as immigrants' most accessible experience of the state (Williamson 2018). Given increasingly restrictive federal policies and the ever more prominent role of cities and towns in responding to immigrants, it's crucial to ask: how will federal policy changes shape local responses to immigrants?

Studying how federal policies influence local practices is challenging. Often, the effect of federal policies on the local level is uniform, negating any variation in the independent variable. For instance, federal policies that require K-12 schools to provide education and English language learning instruction to youth, regardless of immigrant status, are constant across localities in the United States. In other cases, variation in exposure to federal policies depends on voluntary local uptake, such that preexisting local priorities may be driving local responses, rather than the federal policies themselves. For example,

towns that opt into 287(g) agreements that deputize local police for immigration enforcement no doubt start out systematically different from towns that do not. Ideally, to study the effect of federal policies on local responses to immigrants, we need to identify exogenous variation in local exposure to federal policies.

This paper analyzes two such cases. In both cases, local officials do not get to choose their exposure to federal immigration policies, but their exposure nonetheless affects local immigrant-serving practices. First, local officials have little influence over whether refugees are resettled locally, yet the presence of refugees requires them to take serve the newcomers in a variety of ways. Second, local officials do not control whether their resident county contracts with the federal government to house immigrant detainees, but the presence of these detainees has the potential to direct local police attention toward immigration enforcement. I will demonstrate that greater exposure to refugee resettlement, an accommodating federal policy, is associated with increased local innovation to accommodate immigrants in general. In contrast, greater exposure to immigrant detention, a restrictive federal policy, is associated with less local effort to accommodate.

In both cases, I will argue that federal policies produce feedbacks that shape the trajectory of subsequent local policymaking. Policy feedbacks occur when the implementation of a policy represents a critical juncture, resulting in the production of resources, incentives, and interpretive tools, which then reinforce political incentives in a path dependent fashion (Pierson 1993, 2000; Rast 2012). Federal policies have initial instrumental effects – telling local officials what to do and at times providing them with resources to do it. Crucially, however, they also have symbolic or normative effects – telling local officials what to believe (Bloemraad 2006; Marschall, Rigby and Jenkins 2011). Federal immigration policy feedbacks encourage local officials to develop capacity in serving or restricting immigrants, but they also play a central role in framing understandings of immigrants in ways that powerfully shape local immigration policy agendas.

This paper contributes to our understanding of local responses to immigrants by improving measurement of where refugees and detainees are present locally and what local governments are doing in response to immigrants. In addition, it contributes to broader understandings of intergovernmental relations by bringing together literature on policy feedbacks and urban politics to highlight the normative influence of federal policies on municipal practices.

Previous Findings on Federal Policies and Local Responses to Immigrants

Much of the literature on how local governments respond to immigrants has focused on whether ethnic threat or partisanship explains restrictive responses. One school of thought argues that places with fast-growing immigrant populations experience interethnic competition that leads to restrictive responses (Hopkins 2010). Another school maintains that political entrepreneurs in Republican-leaning locales push restrictive responses (Ramakrishnan and Wong 2010; Gulasekaram and Ramakrishnan 2015). A common thread in this literature, however, is the role of local officials' understandings of immigrants in shaping responses (de Graauw, Gleeson, and Bloemraad 2013; Steil and Vasi 2014; Provine et al. 2016; Williamson 2018). National rhetoric (Hopkins 2010), national issue entrepreneurs (Gulasekaram and Ramakrishnan 2015), or local political opportunists (Steil and Vasi 2014) frame immigrants in ways that shape the subsequent direction of policy responses. Along these lines, some have argued that federal policies frame immigrants in ways that define the newcomers as either clients or lawbreakers, amplifying local officials' responses in a corresponding accommodating or restrictive direction (Marrow 2011; Williamson 2018).

To understand the effects of federal policies on local responses to immigrants, however, we must identify federal policies that vary across locales in ways that local officials do not choose. Exposure to refugee resettlement and county-level immigrant detention represent two such policies. Refugees are apportioned across the United States by voluntary agencies, charged with selecting destinations based on

perceived economic opportunity and, where possible, coethnic support networks (Singer and Wilson 2006). Some recent findings, however, suggest that voluntary agencies tend to settle refugees in proximity to resettlement offices that simply happen to have excess capacity when the refugee family arrives (Bansak et al. 2018). In either case, municipal officials' preferences clearly are not driving resettlement patterns. Indeed, local officials complain that they have little input into resettlement decisions affecting their locales (Brown and Scribner 2014, p. 110).

Similarly, local officials do not control their exposure to federal immigration enforcement policies in the form of county-level immigrant detention. Since 1996 immigration reforms, mandatory immigrant detainees include those ordered removed following a criminal conviction, those with final orders removal, and, of special relevance in recent years, those subject to expedited removal processing, including some asylum seekers. In fiscal year 2015, the US government reported housing 30,374 immigrant detainees in 131 facilities (U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement 2015). Of these 131 facilities, 118 were provided through intergovernmental service agreements, in which subnational governments provide excess beds in jail facilities to house detainees. Over the course of 2015, more than two-thirds of detainees nationally (69%) were housed through these intergovernmental agreements, while others were housed in private or federally-operated facilities. Of the 118 centers established through intergovernmental agreements, 85% were county-owned facilities. City-level officials do not control whether their resident county enters an intergovernmental service agreement with the Department of Homeland Security to house immigrant detainees.

Nonetheless, in the case of both refugee resettlement and county-level immigrant detention, exposure to these federal policies shapes local officials' behavior and beliefs, in ways that set the agenda for municipal responses to immigrants. Refugee resettlement policies involve local officials in the day-to-day work of serving refugees, generating feedbacks that encourage them to develop capacity to serve foreign-born residents, and shape their understandings of immigrants as deserving clients of local

government (Soss and Mettler 2004; Schneider and Ingram 2005). Since the 1980 Refugee Act, federal resettlement policies have created an infrastructure for integration in which municipal officials are key players. Upon arrival, refugees are eligible for time-limited aid specific to their status, such as initial cash assistance and technical support in finding employment, managed by voluntary agencies. In addition, refugees are eligible for federal benefits, such as Medicaid and Temporary Aid to Needy Families (Bernstein and DuBois 2018). In contrast, since 1996 legal permanent residents or green card holders have been barred from accessing federal benefits for their first five years in the country, unless states independently intervene (Gelatt and Fix 2007). Refugees' eligibility for services means that local governments are uniquely involved with serving these newcomers. Moreover, their eligibility for services sends a message to local officials that refugees are worthy clients.

Several qualitative studies have documented how federal refugee resettlement policies frame refugees as worthy clients, prompting sympathetic responses from service providers. In contrast, broader federal immigration policies exclude immigrants as clients, prompting hostile bureaucratic responses (Pedraza-Bailey 1985; Horton 2004; Jaworsky et al. 2012). While previous studies have contrasted the treatment of refugees with that of other immigrants, it is possible that refugee resettlement policies generate feedbacks that encourage local officials to invest and build capacity in accommodating immigrants more generally. Indeed, in earlier work involving more than 200 interviews in new immigrant destinations coupled with a survey of small to mid-sized cities, I demonstrated that places that received a visible population of refugees were more active and accommodating toward immigrants in general, than were those without sizable refugee populations (Williamson 2018). This paper tests that finding using improved measures of municipal response and exposure to refugee resettlement. If federal refugee resettlement policy feedbacks indeed shape local practices, we should see that efforts to respond to refugees spill over to affect immigrants more broadly, such that municipalities with larger refugee populations are more active in accommodating immigrants in general.

This paper also tests whether restrictive federal immigration policies can similarly generate feedbacks that shape subsequent local practices in responses to immigrants. Exposure to immigrant detention could involve local officials in immigrant enforcement and frame immigrants first and foremost as lawbreakers. When a county houses immigrant detainees through an intergovernmental agreement, town and city officials, particularly local police, are exposed to the phenomenon. For the most part, town- and city-level arrestees are housed in county-level facilities. Indeed, most localities do not operate their own jails, including large cities such as Phoenix, San Diego, Detroit, and Seattle. When local police use county-level facilities, they are exposed to the instrumental and symbolic messages conveyed by immigrant detention. If these feedbacks indeed shape local practices, we should see that exposure to county-level detention shapes local understandings of immigrants more broadly, such that it dampens local enthusiasm for accommodating the foreign-born.

It is important to acknowledge, however, that the notion that immigrant detention and refugee resettlement affect overall local reception of immigrants is a somewhat surprising claim. In an average year, refugees comprise roughly 7 percent of authorized immigrant flows (McHugh 2018). Overall, refugees represent only 8 percent of the US foreign-born population (Kallick and Mathema 2016). Similarly even the substantial numbers of immigrants held in detention – an average of 42,000 each day in fiscal year 2018 (Sands 2018) – pale in comparison to the national population of more than 44 million immigrants. Finding a relationship between refugee resettlement or immigrant detention policies and broader municipal immigrant accommodation is therefore somewhat unanticipated. To substantiate this relationship, this paper must demonstrate that cities exposed to these policies are not distinct in other ways that shape their responses to immigrants. Even with careful controls, I demonstrate that policy feedbacks from refugee resettlement and immigrant detention to broader municipal immigrant accommodation indeed exist. The marked influence of these federal policies affecting only a small number of immigrants suggests that federal government policies generate feedbacks that are powerful

not only institutionally but also normatively, in ways that shape the local political agenda (Dobbin and Sutton 1998).

These findings echo earlier scholarship on bureaucratic incorporation, which demonstrated how policies can amplify bureaucrats' professional service ethos, or can heighten their regulatory impulses (Marrow 2011; Jones-Correa 2008; Lewis and Ramakrishnan 2007). Here, however, I apply theories of policy feedback to the phenomenon, emphasizing how federal policies generate resources and interpretive tools that both build local capacity to serve or restrict immigrants, and frame immigrants in ways that enhance inclinations to do so. Moreover, I argue that federal policy feedbacks influence not only micro-bureaucratic behavior, but also the broader local political agenda surrounding responses to immigrants among appointed and elected officials.

Data on Municipal Responses and Refugee Presence

The 2016 Municipal Responses to Immigrants Survey (MRIS16), coupled with government administrative data on refugee settlement, present novel measures of key concepts that allow a test of whether federal refugee resettlement and immigrant detention policies influence local accommodating responses to immigrants in general.

Measuring Municipal Responses

To date, much of the literature on local responses to immigrants focuses on places that have passed formal, immigrant-related local ordinances (Hopkins 2010; Ramakrishnan and Wong 2010; Walker and Leitner 2011), which are split roughly evenly between accommodation and restriction (Steil and Vasi 2014). Yet such ordinances are relatively rare, having passed in only 200 of the more than 8,000 immigrant destination locales nationwide (Gulasekaram and Ramakrishnan 2015). Relying on ordinances as a measure of municipal responses directs attention to cities at the extremes of response. In

contrast, the vast majority of immigrant destinations have implemented informal immigrant-serving practices, rather than formal policies (Lewis et al. 2013; Williamson 2018).

To capture the variation in immigrant-serving practices across towns, from February-May 2016, the MRIS16 surveyed officials across a stratified random sample of 1,003 US towns and cities with a population of at least 5,000, that were at least 5% foreign-born.¹ Since the survey includes a full range of municipalities from small villages to the largest cities, this paper refers to these jurisdictions as “immigrant destinations.” Previous studies demonstrate that responses to immigrants can vary across officials within a given immigrant destination (Lewis and Ramakrishnan 2007, Jones-Correa 2008, Marrow 2011). Therefore, the MRIS interviewed both appointed and elected officials in each destination – specifically, the police chief, the city manager (or an alternate high-ranking appointed official), the mayor, and a randomly selected city councilor.²

The multi-modal mail and web survey received responses from 1,400 officials across 814 immigrant destinations nationwide.³ Overall, the MRIS16 attracted responses from 81% percent of destinations surveyed and 35% percent of the officials surveyed, response rates that compare favorably with other recent surveys of organizational executives and exceed recent rates of response for elected officials (Cycota and Harrison 2006, Baruch and Holtom 2008, Lewis et al. 2013, Butler and Dynes 2016). Responding officials reflect the characteristics of municipal officials nationwide. Responding destinations likewise do not differ from non-responding destinations with respect to demographic or partisan characteristics, with the exception of the fact that non-responding destinations are modestly

¹ Support for the 2016 Municipal Responses to Immigrants Survey was provided by The Pew Charitable Trusts. The views expressed herein are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of The Pew Charitable Trusts.

² The MRIS16 builds on the earlier 2014 Municipal Responses to Immigrants Survey, which focused only on cities up to 200,000 in population (Williamson 2018). The MRIS16 surveyed the initial 500 immigrant destinations surveyed in 2014, along with an additional 500 cities. Since the sampling frame for the MRIS16 includes immigrant destinations greater than 5000 in population, the sample includes 27 of the nation’s 30 largest cities and, altogether, 84 of the nation’s 100 largest cities.

³ The survey was administered by the University of Virginia’s Center for Survey Research.

wealthier with respect to median income and home values (see the methodological appendix for additional detail).

The MRIS16 drew on the literature and extensive fieldwork in immigrant destinations nationwide (Williamson 2018), to ask about formal and informal responses to immigrants, officials' views about the role of local government in responding to immigrants, and officials' perceptions of immigrants' local contributions.⁴ The key dependent variable for the analysis that follows is an index of accommodating practices reported by the destination. Accommodating practices are defined as those that aim to increase immigrant opportunities or presence locally.⁵ The index focuses on accommodating practices that destinations choose to implement above and beyond those required by federal law (e.g. beyond requirements to provide translation and interpretation in the presence of a substantial linguistic minority population). In other words, these local responses are not just a sign of complying with federal refugee resettlement or other requirements, but rather examples of independent municipal accommodation. Table 1 presents the list of accommodating practices asked about the survey, as well as their prevalence across immigrant destinations nationwide.⁶

To create town-wide measures of local responses to immigrants, responses are averaged across responding officials within a town.⁷ Because the questionnaire for police chiefs and city hall respondents

⁴ Where possible, the MRIS16 draws on previously validated questions from these surveys. Ramakrishnan and Lewis (2005) surveyed mayors, city councilors, police chiefs, and planning directors in Californian immigrant destinations. Since then, Lewis and his colleagues (2013) have conducted two surveys of law enforcement officials in immigrant destinations nationwide. Rubaii-Barrett (2008) surveyed U.S. members of the International City and County Managers Association. Williams (2013) surveyed police officials and library directors in destinations nationwide.

⁵ I use the term *accommodating*, rather than *welcoming*, since *welcoming* conveys an enthusiasm for newcomers' presence, which may or may not be present when local officials take action to serve immigrants. Local officials may accommodate in response to legal or other incentives, rather than out of an enthusiastic desire to incorporate.

⁶ Percentages are weighted back to the sample frame, enabling conclusions about the prevalence of various municipal responses among immigrant destinations nationwide. Specifically, the data are weighted back to the sample frame on the basis of population size, median household income, region, and residence in a Canadian or Mexican border state. The weighted data match the sample frame on a wide variety of demographic and contextual characteristics as the final column in appendix Table A3 demonstrates.

⁷ For ordinal variables, town-wide measures represent an average of officials' responses within the town. For dichotomous variables, responses are also averaged across officials. When only two officials responded and offered conflicting accounts, where possible, municipal websites and calls to officials reconciled conflicting accounts. Where conflicts were not reconciled, conflicting responses were omitted from analysis, since in these cases a general tendency of response within the

(mayor, councilors, and city managers) differed in ways appropriate to their respective roles, the accommodating index records the proportion of accommodating practices destinations report, allowing the denominator of the number they were asked about to vary. The index includes six practices that all officials were asked about, thirteen practices that only city hall officials were asked about, and one practice—funding or hosting a day labor center—that only destinations that reported having day laborers were asked about (see Table 1). In destinations where least one city hall official responded, which also had day labor presence (28 percent of destinations), the accommodating index represents the percentage of the nineteen total accommodating practices the destination reported. Otherwise the number of accommodating practices the destination could have reported is less than nineteen. For instance, in destinations in which only a police chief responded (20 percent), the destination could report a maximum of seven accommodating practices. Because the index varies with which officials responded in a given destination and because responses can also vary systematically across types of officials, in the analyses the follow I control for destinations where only a police chief (20%) or only a city hall representative (40%) responded.

The accommodating index ranges from a low of zero, reported by 131 destinations (16 percent), to a high of 100 percent, reported by only three destinations. On average, destinations report 27 percent of accommodating practices they are asked about.⁸ This operationalization of municipal responses improves on earlier techniques by taking into account not only formal ordinances, but also far more prevalent informal practices; thus generating a more accurate picture of the landscape of local response across a broad swathe of more than 800 immigrant destinations nationwide.

town is not evident for the given variable (Ramakrishnan and Lewis 2005). On average, only 6% of towns offer conflicting dichotomous responses across twenty dichotomous variables. A number of these conflicts result from differing policies between police departments and city halls within towns. In the absence of these police-city hall conflicts, on average only 5% of towns offer conflicting responses across the twenty dichotomous variables, suggesting that officials within towns tend to present their local responses similarly.

⁸ Cronbach's alpha for the full accommodating index is 0.91, indicating a high level of internal consistency.

Table 1. Accommodating Index Practices by Relative Frequency

	Number of Destinations Reporting	Weighted Percent of Destinations Reporting
Hire immigrants or co-ethnics (CH).	376	60%
Recruit immigrant ethnic group to serve on boards (CH).	322	49%
Design hiring to attract bilingual candidates.	391	47%
Provide in-kind resources for immigrant organizations or activities (CH).	322	44%
Partner with local organizations to provide services to immigrants. (CH)	318	41%
Host events celebrating diversity or promoting intercultural interaction (CH).	309	34%
Issue resolutions in support of immigrants (CH).	250	28%
Educate the public about immigrants (CH).	172	20%
Restructure social service programs for immigrants (CH).	159	20%
Provide funding for immigrant organizations or activities (CH).	193	19%
Develop social service programs for immigrants (CH).	140	16%
Support hiring area or center for day laborers.*	63	13%
Designate employee to liaise with immigrants.	169	12%
Establish immigrant advisory council (CH).	136	11%
Develop programs intended to attract immigrants to settle locally (CH).	117	11%
Sanctuary city or “do not ask, do not tell” policy regarding unauthorized.	131	10%
Establish office for immigrant services (CH).	48	4%
Pass ordinance forbidding police participation in raids and deportations.	14	1%
Pass ordinance forbidding municipal immigration status checks.	10	0%

Note: Practices labeled (CH) are those asked only of city hall respondents (city managers, city councilors, and mayors). Practices indicated with an asterisk were only asked of a subset of respondents, depending on their response to a previous question.

Measuring Local Refugee Populations

Understanding how refugee resettlement affects local immigrant-serving practices also requires an accurate measure of the size of local refugee populations. Yet measuring the size of refugee populations in a given destination presents challenges. Through the Worldwide Refugee Admissions Processing System (WRAPS), the U.S. State Department collects data on refugees’ initial resettlement sites at the local and state level by country of origin.⁹ But refugees often move within the United States after resettlement, a phenomenon known as secondary migration. Data on these outflows exists at the state, but not local level. In fiscal year 2014, for instance, of the 44 states that resettled refugees, nearly

⁹ Julia Tempesta, Lucy Pereira, and Raekwon Wheeler compiled this data on the municipal level.

half (21 states) reported net outflows of refugees. The median outflow was 1.3 refugee departures per one arrival (US Office of Refugee Resettlement).

Identifying refugees once they move beyond their original resettlement destination is even more difficult. In part to ensure that census officials are able to obtain an accurate population count without generating fear among unauthorized immigrant populations, the Census Bureau does not ask about specific immigration statuses on either the decennial Census or the annual American Community Survey (Cohn 2018). Researchers can identify who is foreign-born, but not who is a refugee.¹⁰ With these challenges in mind, few (if any) researchers have examined the effect of local refugee populations on local outcomes. Yet despite the imperfections of the WRAPS data, it offers potentially the best measure of the scale of refugee settlement across cities in the United States.

The MRIS offers the opportunity to check the reliability of the WRAPS data in that it asks officials about the size of the refugee population in their town. Specifically, it provides officials with a standard definition of refugee status, then asks officials which statement best describes the size of their local refugee population, ranging on a one to five scale from no refugees to “refugees are our dominant foreign-born group.” I use this measure to create a dichotomous variable identifying refugee destination cities as those in which officials reported at least “a small but visible refugee population” (Williamson 2018).

In and of itself, however, this measure of refugee presence has three shortcomings. First, it fails to fully capture variation in refugee population size. Second, local officials express a high degree of uncertainty about the size of their refugee population, with 28% of officials (across 19% of destinations) responding “not sure” on this question.¹¹ Third, it is conceivable that officials who are more aware of

¹⁰ Recently, researchers have begun to impute refugee status by identifying country-year pairs in which a foreign-born arrival from a particular country in a given year is highly likely to be a refugee (Capps et al. 2015). While this method has some advantages for tracking refugee-related outcomes nationwide or potentially within states, it is not well suited for examination across a broad range of cities, because census microdata will not be readily available at that level of geographic detail.

¹¹ Since the variable aims to measure the presence of a noticeable population of refugees, it groups destinations in which officials express uncertainty as not having a visible population.

local refugee populations are also more aware of immigrant-serving practices in the destination, generating a positivity bias in which those who reported refugees were also more likely to report accommodation for reasons other than exposure to resettlement. Thus, while earlier work provided evidence that refugee presence in small- to mid-size US cities was strongly associated with independent municipal accommodation (Williamson 2018), further examination of this finding with more precise measurements is necessary.

Therefore, this paper employs the WRAPS data as a means to check the validity of refugee population self-reports from the MRIS, as well as a means to better examine how variation in refugee population size affects local immigrant-serving responses. The database provides public access to refugee arrivals by destination city from 2002 up to the present. Across the 813 destinations examined here, 670 (82 percent) had experienced at least some refugee resettlement from 2002-2016. Cumulatively 70% of the sample had received fewer than a hundred refugees over this 14-year period. Only 14% of the sample had received more than 1000 refugees over the period. Houston, Texas, tops the list, receiving 24,856 refugees during this time, followed by Phoenix, Dallas, San Diego, and then Buffalo, New York. Overall, most destinations are receiving some refugees, but few are receiving substantial numbers of refugees.

Of course, a better measure of whether local officials are actually exposed to refugee resettlement is the number of refugees relative to overall population, since even a large number of refugees in a massive city may go unnoticed. Therefore, the key explanatory variable employed in this analysis is the sum of annual refugee arrivals from 2002-2016, per 1,000 residents in a given immigrant destination (population as reported in the 2009-2013 American Community Survey). As Table 2 displays, over this period nearly two-thirds of destinations have fewer than one refugee arrival per 1,000 residents, while 12% have more than ten refugee arrivals per 1,000 residents. On average, destinations have 4.4 refugee arrivals per 1,000 residents, with a median of 0.75 arrivals per 1,000 residents. Here, El

Cajon, California, a city of just over 100,000, 17 miles east of San Diego, tops the list at 118 refugees per 1,000 residents over this period, followed by tiny Winooski, Vermont, then Syracuse, New York, and Twin Falls, Idaho.

Table 2. MRIS Immigrant Destinations by Number of Refugees Settled, 2002-2016

Refugee Arrivals per 1,000 Residents, 2002-2016	Number of Destinations	Percent of Immigrant Destinations	Percent Reporting Refugee Presence
No refugees	143	18%	9%
0.004 -0.25	172	21%	6%
0.26-0.50	108	13%	7%
0.51-1.00	96	12%	14%
1.01-2.00	82	10%	28%
2.01-5.00	66	8%	43%
5.01-10.00	41	5%	49%
10.01-15.00	33	4%	61%
15.01-25.00	32	4%	72%
25.01-50.00	28	3%	86%
> 50 refugees	12	1%	85%
Total	813	100%	

Source: MRIS16 and the Worldwide Refugee Admissions Processing System (WRAPS)

While WRAPS more effectively captures variation across cities, it has its own shortcomings, in that it fails to capture resettlement prior to 2002, or to account for subsequent secondary migration. Nonetheless, we can feel confident that the WRAPS data on city-level resettlement offer a reasonable proxy for local officials’ exposure to resettlement if officials’ self-reports of refugee presence are correlated with the WRAPS measure. Indeed, the refugee arrivals per 1,000 residents measure is moderately well-correlated with reporting a “small but visible refugee population” on the MRIS (Pearson’s $r = 0.44$). Destinations that report a visible refugee presence have an average of 13.3 refugee arrivals per 1000 residents, while the figure for destinations without a refugee presence is 1.6 refugees per 1000 residents, a statistically significant difference in a two-sided test ($p = 0.00$). The final column

in Table 2 demonstrates that the proportion of destinations reporting a refugee presence on the MRIS increases with additional arrivals per 1000 residents. The measures are clearly similar in identifying local refugee populations. Nonetheless, the correlations likely would be higher if WRAPS provided data prior to 2002. In the WRAPS database, for instance, Wausau, Wisconsin had only 0.9 refugee arrivals per 100 residents from 2002-2016; yet Wausau's dominant immigrant ethnic group is Hmong refugees that arrived prior to 2002.¹² Since both the MRIS self-report and the WRAPS have weaknesses, in subsequent analyses I will demonstrate that by either measure, refugee resettlement experience is strongly associated with municipal accommodation.

Measuring County-level Immigrant Detainee Populations

Understanding how exposure to federal immigration detention affects local responses requires data identifying the distribution of detainees across counties. Here, I use Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) data to construct a measure of the county-level immigrant detention population in 2015 per 1000 local residents.¹³ The MRIS includes 814 towns and cities, clustered in 396 counties. Of these, 268 towns and cities are clustered in 87 counties that are listed as having detention centers in 2015. Yet, many of these counties housed no detainees over the course of the year. For town officials to be exposed to federal immigration detention, ostensibly they would have to have detainees housed locally. Therefore, I focus on the 177 towns (22% of the sample) clustered in 53 counties, which housed detainees across 68 detention centers. Immigrant detainees can be housed at the local level in various types of centers. Of the 68 centers counted here, there were six contract detention facilities run by private firms and four service processing centers. On the whole, however, detainees were held in excess

¹² Obtaining data prior to 2002 may be impossible, since Singer and Wilson (2006) report that pre-2002 data list refugees by resettlement office location rather than actual town of residence.

¹³ Shanna Weitz identified and compiled this data, which was previously available on the ICE website at: <https://www.ice.gov/sites/default/files/documents/FOIA/2016/2015IceDetentionFacilityListing.xlsx>

beds in 58 county jail facilities, through intergovernmental agreements between the federal government and the county.

Overall, 637 towns are in counties with no detainees, just over one hundred towns (12%) are in counties with from 0-500 detainees, 64 towns (8%) are in counties with from 501-1000 detainees, and only 13 towns (2%) are in four counties with more than 1,000 detainees. Specifically, Pinal County, Arizona tops the list with 2,349 detainees in 2015, followed by Pierce County, Washington, San Bernardino County, California, and Cameron County, Texas. Among the top ten counties in the sample, only Pierce County in Washington (home to Tacoma) lies beyond a border state.

As with refugee resettlement, however, a better measure of local exposure may be detainees per capita. Large-scale immigrant detention is likely of greater note in a small county than in a bustling urban county. Therefore, the key explanatory variable in this analysis is county-level detainees per 1,000 county residents (as measured in the 2009-2013 American Community Survey.) Once again, as Table 3 displays, most towns (78%) have no exposure to county-level immigrant detention. An additional 19% have up to one detainee per 1,000 county residents. And only 2% have more than one detainee per 1,000 county residents, with a maximum of 8 detainees per 1,000 residents in Polk County, Texas, home to the small town of Livingston.

Table 3. MRIS Immigrant Destinations by County-level Immigrant Detainees, 2015

County Immigrant Detention Pop., per 1,000 Residents	Number of Destinations	Percent of Immigrant Destinations
No detainees	637	78%
> 0 - 0.1	59	7%
0.11 - 0.25	43	5%
0.26 - 0.50	40	5%
0.51 - 1.00	19	2%
1.01 - 4.00	9	1%
> 4.00	6	1%
Total	813	100%

Source: MRIS16 and Immigration and Customs Enforcement data.

Accounting for Other Factors Influencing Refugee Resettlement and Accommodation

Demonstrating a convincing relationship between refugee resettlement or immigrant detention and municipal accommodation requires diminishing the possibility that alternate factors are driving both resettlement and accommodation. First, it is crucial to recall from the preceding discussion that officials' own openness toward refugee resettlement or county-level immigrant detention, does not drive local exposure to these policies. That said, it remains possible that voluntary agency decisions about where to direct refugees, or county-level decisions about whether to house immigrant detainees, are influenced by demographic, economic, or partisan characteristics of immigrant destinations, such that these characteristics are driving accommodation rather than exposure to federal policies. Therefore, in the analyses that follow, I control for a variety of contextual factors that may be related to refugee resettlement or county-level detention and also could influence the degree of municipal immigrant accommodation. Previous studies have suggested that destination capacity, ethnic threat, immigrant visibility, political characteristics, local immigrant influence, and external policy cues, including exposure to refugee resettlement and immigrant detention, shape the degree of municipal accommodation (Williamson 2018).

With respect to capacity, I control for destination population (natural log of the 2009-2013 American Community Survey population estimate), direct municipal expenditures per capita (US Census of Governments 2012), the percentage of the population with a bachelor's degree or greater in 2013, the percent change in median household income from 2000-2013, and the percentage of the working-age population employed in agriculture. Population serves as a proxy for the destination's administrative capacity, since larger cities have more staff and perform more functions locally (Deweese, Lobao, and Swanson 2003). Direct general expenditures capture municipal payments other than intergovernmental spending, and indicate the destination's degree of resources to implement programming and policies (Jeong 2006; 2007). Controlling for both the proportion with a four-year

college degree and the degree of change in median household income over time acknowledges that more economically prosperous towns may have greater capacity to accommodate immigrants (Steil and Vasi 2014; Williamson 2018). Lastly, I hold constant the agricultural proportion of the civilian workforce because places highly reliant on agricultural labor may have greater ability to absorb newcomers into the economy and therefore produce less restrictive responses (Ramakrishnan and Wong 2010; Gulasekaram and Ramakrishnan 2015).

Some previous studies have posited that places with larger or faster-growing immigrant populations experience ethnic threat, which results in less accommodating practices toward immigrants (Hopkins 2010, Walker and Leitner 2011, Steil and Vasi 2014). These studies suggest a larger immigrant population, a faster-growing immigrant population, or a more Hispanic-dominant immigrant population can result in higher levels of ethnic threat. With this in mind, I control for the proportion foreign-born, the proportion of the foreign-born who are Hispanic, the proportion of the foreign-born living in poverty (all from the American Community Survey 2009-2013), and the percent change in the foreign-born population from 2000-2013 (US Census 2000; American Community Survey 2009-13).¹⁴ In addition, since some studies that found that threatened responses are more prominent where there is greater concern over home values, I also control for the percent home ownership (Singer, Wilson, and DeRenzis 2009; Walker and Leitner 2011).

Other studies, however, have found that several factors previously attributed to ethnic threat, such as the size of the foreign-born population and its Hispanic dominance, can actually result in more prevalent immigrant-serving practices (Provine et al 2016; Williamson 2018). Accommodation may be more common where immigrant populations are readily visible to municipal officials, whether due to their size or their ethnicity. Local officials associate immigrants with Hispanics, the United States'

¹⁴ Note that percentage foreign-born and percentage Hispanic foreign-born are not collinear (Pearson's $r = 0.16$). That is, places in which there is a larger foreign-born population are not necessarily places where the foreign-born population is more Hispanic-dominant.

largest immigrant ethnic group (Williamson 2018). Negative relationships between these variables and accommodation would suggest that ethnic threat is operational, while positive relationships would suggest that immigrant visibility is a more plausible explanation.

While capacity, immigrant threat or visibility, are likely contributors to local responses, we would also expect that in today's polarized environment an immigrant destination's political characteristics would shape its degree of municipal accommodation. Specifically, we would expect lower levels of accommodation in more Republican-leaning locales (Ramakrishnan and Wong 2010; Walker and Leitner 2011; Gulasekaram and Ramakrishnan 2015; Williamson 2018). I therefore control for the county-level proportion voting for President Trump in 2016.¹⁵ In addition, some previous studies suggest that places with a council-manager system may be less subject to political pressures and therefore less likely to respond to calls for restrictive policies (Lewis et al 2013). Others suggest that strong mayor systems give the leading executive political leeway to pursue an agenda of welcoming immigrants (Huang and Yang Liu 2016). I therefore include a dichotomous variable equal to one where the town has a council-manager form (2011 International City/County Manager Association Municipal Form of Government Survey).

Responses to immigrants may also vary where immigrants have more influence in local civic and political life (Ramakrishnan and Bloemraad 2008). Therefore, I include a dichotomous variable equal to one when the destination has at least one Latino official (NALEO 2015). Likewise, I include a dichotomous measure if the town had at least one pro-immigrant protest during widespread activism in 2006 following the proposal of restrictive immigration legislation in Congress (Bada et al. 2006). As a measure of immigrant civic presence, I include a count of immigrant-related organizations per 1000

¹⁵ Although partisanship can vary within counties, town-level presidential results are not available for all states. Einstein and Kogan (2015) have generated town-level presidential partisanship in 2008 for most states, but no data are available for the states of Georgia and Oregon. Overall, town-level partisanship data are missing for forty-one towns that responded to the MRIS, so I chose to use county-level partisanship as a consistent metric across places.

residents, drawing on Guidestar, a website that compiles and categorizes non-profit organizations' 990 tax forms.¹⁶

Lastly, with respect to external policy cues, in addition to exposure to refugee resettlement and county-level immigrant detention, I control for state policies toward immigrants and proximity to land borders. Some destinations are located within states that mandate services to immigrants, while others are within states that restrict services. Therefore, in my analyses I include an index of state policy responses that ranges from -3 among the most restrictive states to 2 among the most accommodating. The index aggregates prominent state responses to immigrants in recent years; specifically, offering driver's licenses to unauthorized immigrants, providing or restricting in-state tuition for unauthorized immigrants, requiring E-verify at the state level, and participating in the suit against President Obama's November 2014 immigration executive actions (Pew Charitable Trusts 2014, 2015a, 2015b; National Conference of State Legislatures 2015; Migration Policy Institute 2016). Beyond exposure to immigrant detention, some scholars argue that destinations proximate to land borders experience particularly concentrated exposure to enforcement in ways that shape local responses (Lewis et al. 2013).

Finally, as noted above, in order to address variation in the index due to the officials responding within a given destination, I control for destinations in which only a police chief or only a city hall representative responded. Table 4 presents the mean value and the range for the variables included in the analysis.

¹⁶ After an systematic process that identified categories of post-1965 immigrant-related organizations across a diverse array of more than fifty US immigrant destinations, research assistant Julia Tempesta identified immigrant-related organizations in the following categories: Arts, Culture, and Humanities (Alliances and Advocacy, Cultural and Ethnic Awareness, Other); Human Services (Ethnic and Immigrant Centers); International, Foreign Affairs & National Security (Promotion of International Understanding, International Migration and Refugee Issues); Civil Rights, Social Action, and Advocacy (Alliances and Advocacy, Immigrants' Rights, Minority Rights, Intergroup and Race Relations, and Other); and Religion-related (Islam, Buddhism, and Hinduism). Twenty-two percent of towns (181 towns) had no registered immigrant-related organizations in these categories; 15% had one such organization; and the remaining 63% had two or more, with a maximum of 402 such organizations in New York City. Measuring immigrant organizations through 990 forms does provide an undercount of immigrant organizations, in that organizations with revenues under \$25,000 and many religious nonprofits are not required to submit these tax forms (Gleeson and Bloemraad 2012). That said, the undercount should be similar across cities, rather than biasing the overall measure, and we have no better proxy for immigrant organizational presence across cities.

Table 4. Descriptive Statistics on Key Variables

	Mean	Low Value	High Value
Capacity			
Population 2013	116,645	5,025	8,268,999
Direct Expenditures 2012 per 1000	1.61	0.10	16.99
Percent BA degree	32%	3%	88%
Percent change median HH income 00-13	-11%	41%	57%
Percent Agricultural Employment	1%	0%	32%
Visibility			
Percent foreign-born	17%	3%	62%
Ethnic Threat			
Percent change foreign-born 00-13	71%	-47%	2097%
Percent foreign-born Hispanic	44%	0%	100%
Percent foreign-born poverty	19%	0%	58%
Percent Home Ownership	54%	11%	96%
Political Characteristics			
Percent Voting Trump 2016 (county)	42%	4%	83%
Council manager form of government (=1)	69%	0	1
Immigrant Influence			
Hispanic local government official (=1)	30%	0	1
2006 Immigrant protest (=1)	13%	0	1
Immigrant organizations per 1000	0.08	0.00	0.91
External Policy Cues			
State-level Immigrant Policy Score	0.09	-3	2
W/in 100 miles of Mexican Border (=1)	5%	0	1
W/in 100 miles of Canadian Border (=1)	4%	0	1
County immg. detention pop. per 1000 (county)	0.11	0.00	7.94
Reporting small but visible refugee pop.	24%	0	1
Refugees 2002-2016, per 1000 residents	4.39	0.00	117.66

Federal Immigration Policy Feedbacks and Municipal Accommodation

To test how federal immigration policy feedbacks affect the proportion of accommodating practices implemented locally, I employ a generalized linear model that treats the outcome distribution as binomial and specifies a logit link function, with standard errors clustered at the county level.¹⁷ Table

¹⁷ Given the nested nature of the data, with controls at the town, county, and state level, multi-level modeling is a plausible alternative. However, clustered standard errors proved preferable given that 64% of the counties included only a single town, which makes partitioning the variance between and within clusters less reliable. Nonetheless, the primary results presented here with respect to the influence of refugee resettlement and county-level detention are robust to a mixed effects model with county and state random effects.

5 presents the regression results. I first examine the effect of exposure to refugee resettlement, then turn to immigrant detention, and finally put these in the context of the magnitude of effect of other factors contributing to local accommodation of immigrants.

Table 5. Testing the Effect of Federal Policies on Municipal Accommodation

Variables	Refugee Explanatory Variable = Local Refugee Arrivals 2002-2016 per 1000 residents			Refugee Explanatory Variable = Destination reports at least "small but visible refugee population"		
	Coef.	SE	Signif.	Coef.	SE	Signif
Log Population 2013	0.386	0.043	****	0.357	0.048	****
Direct Expenditures 2012 per 1000	0.076	0.036	**	0.022	0.051	
Percent BA degree	0.508	0.322		0.538	0.374	
Percent change median HH income 00-13	-0.439	0.412		-0.415	0.491	
Percent foreign-born	0.913	0.460	**	0.705	0.528	
Percent change foreign-born 00-13	-0.002	0.037		-0.001	0.042	
Percent foreign-born Hispanic	0.540	0.212	**	0.503	0.244	**
Percent foreign-born poverty	0.870	0.487	*	0.839	0.553	
Percent Home Ownership	-1.124	0.429	***	-1.446	0.509	***
Percent Voting Trump 2016 (county)	-0.010	0.003	***	-0.012	0.004	***
Percent Agricultural Employment	2.053	0.967	**	2.098	1.043	**
Council manager form of government	-0.179	0.079	**	-0.192	0.088	**
Hispanic local government official	-0.147	0.090		-0.128	0.104	
2006 Immigrant protest	0.066	0.114		0.004	0.126	
Immigrant organizations per 1000	0.353	0.440		0.170	0.451	
State-level Immigrant Policy Score (state)	0.066	0.029	**	0.101	0.032	**
W/in 100 miles of Mexican Border	-0.254	0.196		-0.145	0.225	
W/in 100 miles of Canadian Border	-0.198	0.170		-0.211	0.207	
County immg. detention pop. per 1000 (county)	-0.257	0.099	***	-0.223	0.121	**
Refugee presence	0.012	0.003	****	0.505	0.093	****
Police-only response	-0.416	0.107	****	0.445	0.110	****
City Hall-only response	-0.183	0.075	**	-0.128	0.088	
Intercept	-4.858	0.566	****	-5.071	0.645	****

Note. Binomial GLM fit with logit link. Robust standard errors are clustered on county.

**** p < .001, *** p < .01, ** p < .05, * p < .1

Whether measured as refugee arrivals per 1,000 residents (model one) or as self-reported refugee presence (model two), exposure to refugee resettlement is positively and statistically significantly associated with higher levels of independent municipal accommodation practices. Therefore, in the analysis that follows I focus primarily on the finer-grained measure of refugee resettlement exposure from the WRAPS. Even holding constant conflated factors, experience with refugee resettlement appears to enhance the likelihood of accommodating immigrants more generally. Specifically, as Figure 1 demonstrates, moving from no refugee resettlement to 15 refugee arrivals per 1,000 residents (roughly one standard deviation above the mean) is associated with an increase on the accommodation index of 3 percentage points (when holding other variables constant at their means). On average across the destinations, the accommodating index consists of sixteen practices that aim to increase immigrant opportunities or presence. Therefore, an increase of three percentage points is equivalent to implementing an additional half of an accommodating practice on average. While the magnitude of the relationship is not massive, the fact that it exists at all is remarkable. The addition of just 15 refugee arrivals per 1000 residents over a fourteen year period is strongly statistically associated with an increase in accommodating immigrants.

Similarly, as anticipated, exposure to restrictive federal policies in the form of county-level immigrant detention, is associated with declines in accommodation. As Figure 2 displays, even when holding other variables constant at their means, moving from no county-level immigrant detainees to 0.75 detainees per 1,000 (just over one standard deviation above the mean), is associated with a decline in accommodation of three percentage points. Again, while the magnitude is not massive, it remains remarkable that even a small per capita increase in detainees – less than one detainee per 1000 county residents – significantly shapes local accommodation.

Figure 1. Predicted Level of Accommodation by Refugee Arrivals Per 1,000 Residents

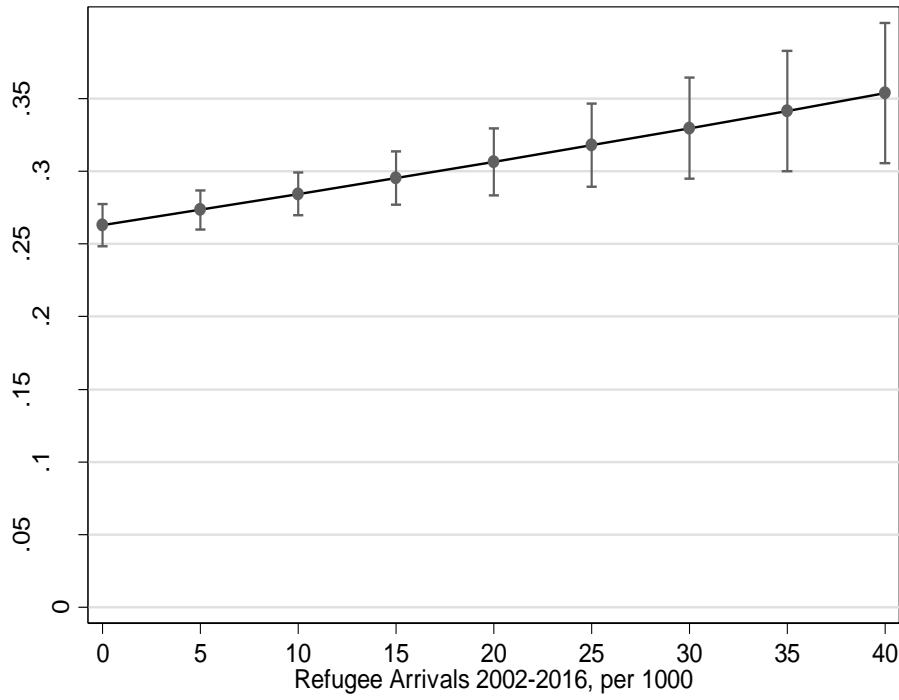
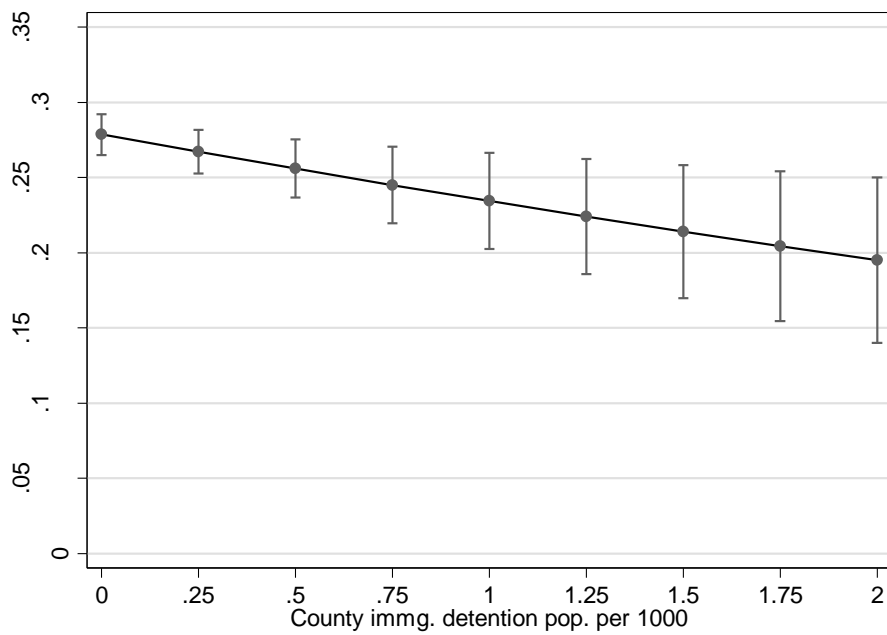


Figure 2. Predicted Level of Accommodation by County-level Immigrant Detainees Per 1,000



As Figure 3 indicates, in addition to the effect of federal policy feedbacks on local accommodation, three measures of local capacity are strongly positively associated with greater accommodation. Increasing population size has the most substantial impact on promoting accommodation. Moving from a small town of 14,000 to a mid-sized city of 200,000 is associated with a predicted increase on the accommodation scale of fully 20 percentage points. Even holding constant fiscal capacity, partisanship, immigrant population size and characteristics, and other factors, large cities are much likely to accommodate immigrants. A city's fiscal capacity, however, has an additional, independent effect on increasing accommodation. Moving from a city with \$0.40 in direct general expenditures per 1,000 residents to a city with \$2.80 was associated with a 3 percentage point increase on the accommodation index. Likewise, the proportion of the workforce employed in agriculture had a small, but significant impact on increasing accommodation.

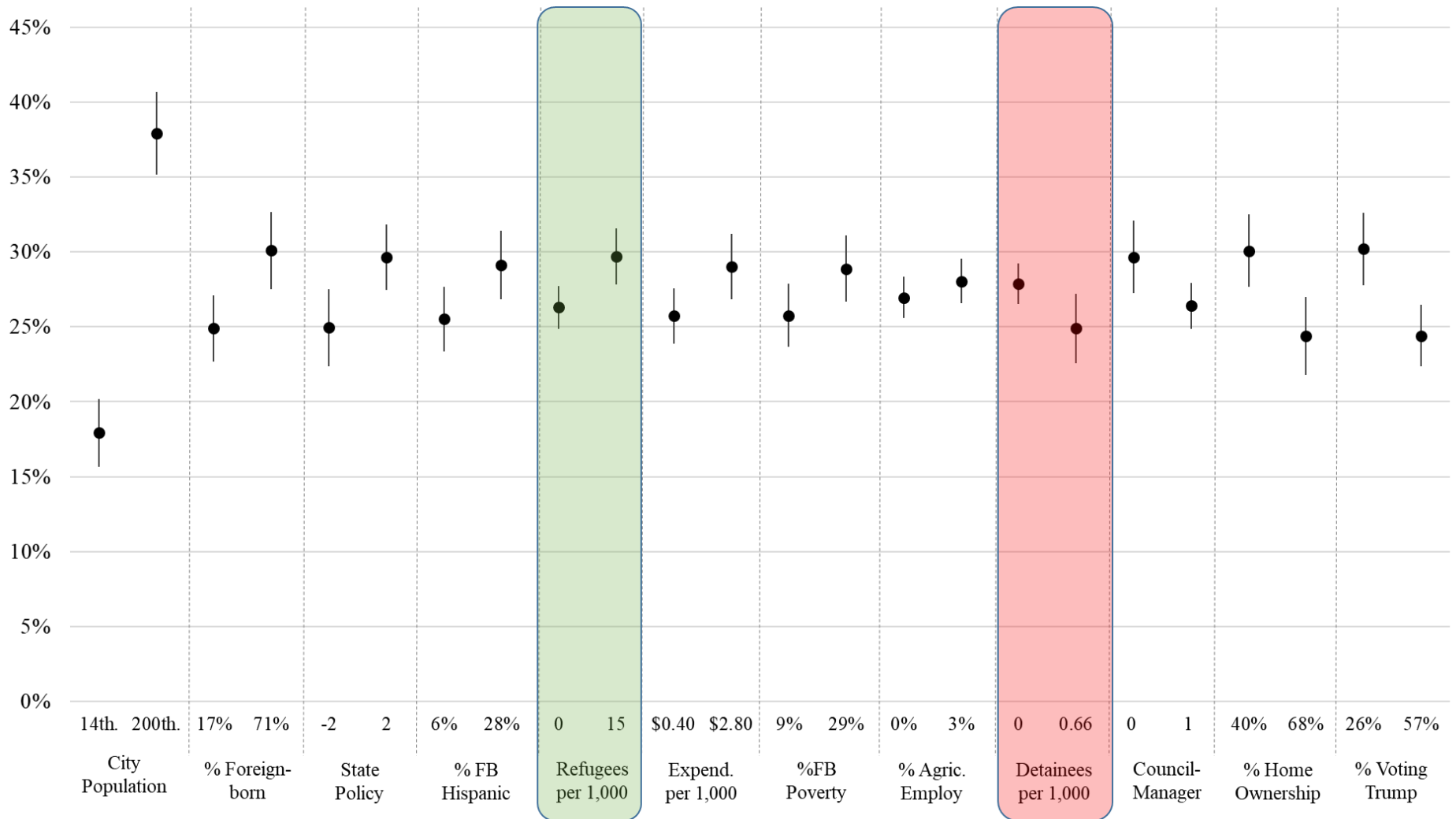
Immigrant visibility also plays a role in increasing accommodation. Moving from a destination that is 6% foreign-born to one that is more than a quarter foreign-born is associated with a predicted four percentage point increase in accommodation. Likewise, two characteristics of the foreign-born population that make them more visible to local officials also make local officials more likely to accommodate. Moving from a city in which 17% of the foreign-born are Hispanic to a city in which nearly three-quarters are Hispanic is associated with a predicted five percentage point increase in accommodation. Moving from a city in which 9% of the foreign-born live in poverty to one in which 29% do, is similarly associated with an increase in accommodation of three percentage points. Including the proportion of the foreign-born living in poverty plays another important role in the model. One could argue that destinations with refugees are more likely to accommodate because refugees are more needy. This model demonstrates that exposure to refugee resettlement remains a significant predictor of accommodation even when holding constant foreign-born poverty.

In sum, all three of these factors suggest that rather than producing ethnic threat, larger and more visible immigrant populations, encourage greater response from local officials. On the other hand, homeownership is strongly negatively associated with accommodation, suggesting that places in which home values are more prized may be particularly inhospitable to immigrants. Moving from a place with 40% home ownership to 68% homeownership is associated with a predicted decline in accommodation of six percentage points. Similarly, living in a county with more 2016 Trump voters is associated with a decline in accommodation. Moving from a place like Norfolk, Virginia in which 26% of county residents voted for Trump to a place like Florence, Arizona in which 57% of county residents did so is associated with a predicted decline in accommodation of six percentage points. Political institutions also influence accommodation. While council manager governments have been associated with less restriction in past research (Lewis et al. 2013), here having a reformed government is associated with a decline in accommodation, perhaps because of the decisive role that mayors can play in leading accommodation of immigrants in some large cities (Huang and Liu 2018).

Lastly, the influence of state policies provide yet another indication of the power of supra-local policy exposure – whether federal or state-level – in shaping local accommodation. Moving from a state as restrictive as North Carolina, to a state as accommodating as California is associated with an increase in local accommodation of five percentage points.

Bearing in mind that destination capacity, immigrant visibility, and a more favorable state policy environment positively shape accommodation, while home ownership and certain political characteristics negatively influence it, how does the effect of federal policy feedbacks compare to these other factors? Figure 3 presents the predicted probabilities of accommodation for the statistically significant variables when moving from one standard deviation below the mean to one standard deviation above (in all cases while holding other variables at their mean). The variables are ordered left to right from the greatest positive magnitude to the greatest negative magnitude of effect on

Figure 3. Predicted Level of Accommodation by Key Explanatory Variables



accommodation. While neither refugee resettlement nor immigrant detention have the largest effects on accommodation, they are similar in magnitude to other key contributors, such as percentage foreign-born and foreign-born ethnic composition. Although federal refugee resettlement and immigrant detention policies involve a small fraction of immigrants, the effects of these policies reverberate to significantly affect the trajectory of local response to immigrants in general.

Discussion and Conclusion

This paper makes a provocative claim that two federal policies involving a relatively small number of immigrants – refugee resettlement and immigrant detention – shape exposed local officials’ municipal accommodation of *all* immigrants. These policies allow us to test the effect of federal policy feedbacks on local responses, since local officials cannot control their exposure to refugee resettlement or county-level immigration detention, but they experience the effects. Officials that experience refugee resettlement develop knowledge and skills related to immigrant integration and come to see immigrants in general as part of their client base. Conversely, exposure to immigrant detention foregrounds definitions of immigrants as lawbreakers and has the potential to direct police to develop enforcement capacities. Consonant with theories of policy feedback, these federal policies convey resources, incentives, and interpretive tools that shape municipal leaders’ actions and understandings of groups as deserving or undeserving (Pierson 1993; Schneider and Ingram 2005; Soss and Mettler 2004). As the theory would predict, these feedbacks set municipalities on a path over time toward greater accommodation in the case of refugee resettlement, or lesser accommodation in the case of county-level immigrant detention (Pierson 2000, Bleich 2002).

While previous findings suggested a relationship between refugee resettlement and municipal immigrant accommodation (Williamson 2018), this paper provides more compelling evidence through improved measurement of both municipal accommodation and local refugee population size. The 2016

Municipal Responses to Immigrants Survey provides a comprehensive measure of informal immigrant-serving practices across 814 immigrant destinations nationwide – a randomly selected group that includes villages of 5,000 residents but also preferences centers of population to include 84 of the nation’s 100 largest cities. In addition, this paper presents evidence from two different measures of exposure to refugee resettlement – a self-report of local refugee population size from the MRIS and a figure on refugee arrivals from government administrative data. While both measures of refugee resettlement exposure are imperfect, in concert they improve upon our previous ability to operationalize local refugee presence. The fact that the measures are correlated and both strongly associated with accommodation suggests that resettling refugees indeed puts municipalities on a path toward greater accommodation of immigrants in general. As federal policies grow increasingly restrictive under President Trump, the effects of exposure to county-level immigrant detention also demonstrate that restrictive policies can reverberate on the local level in ways that hamper independent local accommodation.

Federal policies convey both instrumental and symbolic messages that shape officials’ behavior and beliefs (Bloemraad 2006; Marschall, Rigby, and Jenkins 2011). Refugee resettlement policy offers some indication that the normative element of federal policies is particularly influential, above and beyond the incentives created by providing resources for resettlement. If resources alone were determinative of responses, we would expect more favorable responses to immigrants only in the early years of resettlement, as officials are directly receiving resources. Instead, we see that cumulative exposure to refugee resettlement over a period of 14-years, rather than only recent refugee resettlement, is associated with greater local accommodation. While refugee resettlement certainly provides local officials with resources and incentives to build skills, its central power may rest in its ability to frame immigrants as clients of local government services. These findings suggest that federal policies have

normative power over understandings of immigrants that shape subsequent municipal policy innovation (Williamson 2019).

Federal policies push municipal responses in a particular direction in a top-down fashion, but local governments produce their own innovations in response. In all likelihood, intergovernmental policy feedbacks will not be unidirectional. Urban innovations to welcome immigrants may likewise feed back to shape future federal reform efforts from the bottom up. Indeed, since 2012-2013, as prospects for federal immigration reform grew increasingly dim, advocates of expansionist policies have increasingly focused their attention on the state and local level (Gulasekaram and Ramakrishnan 2015). While these efforts may ultimately influence the shape of federal reform, this paper suggests that relinquishing a focus on the federal level would be costly for immigration advocates. Federal policies possess demonstrable normative power to define immigrants as local clients and set towns nationwide on a trajectory toward greater accommodation, or to define immigrants as lawbreakers, setting towns on a trajectory toward less accommodation and potentially greater restriction.

APPENDIX A

The 2016 Municipal Responses to Immigrants Survey (MRIS16) is a nationwide multi-mode survey examining how municipalities respond to immigration at the local level. The survey was designed by the author and administered by the University of Virginia’s Center for Survey Research.

Sampling

The MRIS16 sample frame consists of the 4,079 U.S. cities and towns greater than 5,000 in population that are at least 5% foreign-born (American Community Survey 2009-2013). The sample frame excludes places of less than 5,000 because they are unlikely to have officials in each of the roles surveyed. The sample includes places in 49 states; Montana is excluded from the sample, since it has no cities greater than 5,000 that are at least 5% foreign-born.¹⁸

An initial wave of the Municipal Responses to Immigrants Survey was conducted in 2014 with 503 places between 5,000 to 200,000 in population that were at least 5% foreign-born (results reported in Williamson (2018)). These destinations were re-surveyed in 2016, along with 500 additional destinations that included places greater than 200,000 in population.

The 503 destinations sampled in 2014 and the 500 destinations sampled in 2016 were selected using stratified random sampling on the basis of region and population size to prioritize centers of population. The sample frame was divided into eight population strata segmented across four regions. The proportion of the sample frame population that lived in each of the 32 strata was calculated. A number of places proportionate to the stratum’s representation in the overall frame population was then randomly drawn from each stratum. Randomly sampling without stratification would result in a sample consisting primarily of prevalent small towns, with few less prevalent (but more populous) large cities. Because destinations greater than 100,000 in population include such a substantial proportion of the population, in 2016 all immigrant destinations greater than 100,000 were sampled (267 cities in total) and the remainder of destinations are distributed proportionally by population across the strata.¹⁹

¹⁸ The MRIS16 uses cities and towns as its unit of analysis rather than counties, due to substantial differences in the role of counties across states. Connecticut and Rhode Island, for instance have no county-level government, while Hawaii’s municipal government operates primarily at the county level. In contrast, cities generally serve similar functions across states, allowing for a more uniform unit of comparison. In a few states, however, particularly Hawaii, Maryland, and Virginia, counties serve as a more dominant form of local government and fewer cities are incorporated. As a result, these states are somewhat underrepresented in the sample. Nonetheless, sampling at the city-level remains appropriate to ensure comparability, since cities fulfill similar functions across states, whereas the role of counties varies greatly.

¹⁹ The sampling frame includes 1,355 census defined places (CDP) and 2,724 cities, towns, villages, and other non-county municipal forms. While the Census defines CDPs as “the statistical counterparts” of unincorporated places, in reality, some census-defined places correspond to incorporated municipalities, while others do not. Since the Census Bureau measures places differently across states, excluding CDPs from the sampling frame biases the sample away from certain states. Where a sampled CDP was not found to have a corresponding incorporated government in internet searches, the CDP was randomly replaced by a different place within its region and population stratum. The sample includes 39 CDPs, considerably lower than their proportion in the overall frame, in part due to the fact that CDPs are generally small. Of the 1,345 CDPs, 1,005 of the CDPs have a population of less than 20,000. Because states have different numbers of CDPs present and CDPs correspond differently to municipalities across states, replacement rates for CDPs differ across states. In Massachusetts, for instance, 52 of the 103 places in the frame are listed as census-defined places. Excluding these places would eliminate large swathes of Massachusetts from consideration, including the towns of Lexington and Framingham, which are in the sample. Similar situations are apparent in New York and New Jersey, where eliminating CDPs would remove relatively large cities such as Irondequoit, NY or Edison, NJ from consideration.

Within each sampled destination, four officials—the police chief, the city manager, the mayor, and a randomly selected city councilor—were contacted to participate in the survey. Detailed contact information for each official was collected from municipal websites and verified prior to survey administration. Where a mayor was not present, a comparable lead elected official was contacted. Where a city manager or comparable lead appointed official was not present, the survey went to a Director of Development, or in the absence of such a position, the Director of Planning. In cases where a police chief was not present, the destination often contracted with the county for law enforcement services. In these cases, the survey went to the official charged with overseeing public safety in the destination, whether a director of public safety or a county law enforcement officer assigned to liaise with the destination.

Questionnaire

City hall officials – city managers, mayors, and city councilors – received one version of the questionnaire and police chiefs received a somewhat different version with questions particular to the law enforcement role. The MRIS16 instrument was based on the questionnaire from the 2014 wave, with some revisions. In addition to original questions, the MRIS includes previously validated questions from earlier surveys of local officials’ responses to immigrants (Ramakrishnan and Lewis 2005, Rubaii-Barrett 2008, Lewis et al. 2013, and Williams 2013).²⁰

Survey Administration

Survey administration began with advance-notice letters mailed on February 2, 2016. Thereafter, three types of communication were used in correspondence with respondents—traditional mail, email, and telephone calls – though the design prioritized completion by mail, since mail surveys continue to receive higher response rates (Dillman, Smyth, and Christian 2008). On February 9, 2016, the first survey packets were mailed to officials with a pre-paid postage envelope for the completed questionnaire. A reminder postcard followed on February 19, with a second survey packet mailed to non-respondents in early March. In mid-March, non-respondents received an invitation to complete the survey via the internet, followed by two reminder emails and a final email in late April announcing that data collection would close in a week. Phone calls to non-respondents took place in the first week of April and additional mail survey packets were distributed to those who requested them. Data collection officially closed on May 2, 2016. Following data entry, 10% of mail questionnaires were randomly selected for validation.

In an effort to ensure response from large cities within the sample, special outreach was conducted via email to offices of immigrant affairs in 27 sampled cities.²¹ Staff members in these offices received information that the survey had been distributed to four officials in their city and were asked to encourage survey completion.

²⁰ Prior to survey production, between November 17, 2015 and December 3, 2015, twelve municipal officials pre-tested the questionnaire in its mail and internet forms and provided feedback in an interview. Using a cognitive interviewing strategy, officials read the questions and response categories aloud and talked through how they would answer each question. Pre-testers were selected primarily from among cities in the sampling frame that had not been sampled. An effort was made to maximize variation among pre-testers in terms of official role, region, and population size. Ultimately, pre-testers included three police officials, four city managers, three city councilors, and two mayors from cities across all regions, ranging in size from roughly 8,000 to roughly 110,000. Pre-testers also varied in terms of their ideological and demographic characteristics. Following pre-testing, the MRIS16 questionnaire was revised to address minor issues identified.

²¹ Mayors offices of immigrant affairs identified through Pastor, Ortiz, and de Grauw, 2015.

Response Rates and Sample Characteristics

Eighty-one percent of the destinations surveyed responded, for a total of 814 out of 1,003 destinations. In 43% of destinations surveyed, we received a response from more than one official (Table A1). Of the 3,950 officials surveyed across the 1,003 destinations, 1,400 responded for a response rate of 35% (Table A2).^{22,23} These response rates compare favorably to other recent surveys of organizational executives and exceed recent rates of response for elected officials. As in other recent local government surveys, police chiefs were most likely to respond, followed by city managers, and then elected officials.²⁴

Table A1. Response Rate across Destinations

	Number	Percent
No response	189	19%
One response	387	39%
Two responses	287	29%
Three responses	121	12%
Four responses	19	2%
Total Towns	1003	
Total responding	814	81%
Multiple response towns	427	43%

Table A2. Response Rate across Officials

	Sampled	Responded	% Response
Police	985	488	50%
City Manager	980	345	35%
City Councilor	993	300	30%
Mayor	992	267	27%
	3,950	1,400	35%

²² The official response rate (AAPOR RR3), which factors in 11 cases of “unknown eligibility” that we were unable to reach due to absent or erroneous contact information, remains 35%. This calculation also treats as non-respondents 16 partial responses in which more than half but less than all of the survey was completed. These respondents are included as having completed the survey in the tables presented here, since they answered all the questions related to their town’s responses to immigrants and this data can be used for analysis. Only 83 respondents refused the survey. An additional 23 logged on to the on-line survey but did not complete any questions. Therefore, the cooperation rate (AAPOR CR3) was 92%.

²³ Generally, four officials were surveyed in each town. In 62 towns from the 2014 sample only three officials were surveyed because one official from the town refused the survey in 2014 (emailing or calling to indicate that they would not participate). Following appropriate protocols, these subjects were omitted from consideration in 2016.

²⁴ Analyzing 231 surveys of organizational executives published in top management journals from 1992-2003, Cycyota and Harrison (2006) found average response rates of 32%, with response rates declining over time. Analyzing 117 studies across 17 highly-ranked management and behavioral science journals, Baruch and Holtom (2008) find average response rates of 36%, though not all of these surveys addressed executives such as the local government officials in question here. Looking specifically at surveys of local government officials’ responses to immigrants, Ramakrishnan and Lewis’s (2005) 2003 California survey received responses from 86% of cities, though they interviewed more than four officials in each city. They received response rates of 62% among police chiefs and 30% among elected officials. The MRIS16 combined elected official response rate of 29% is only slightly lower. It also substantially exceeds the 20% response rate from a 2012 survey of elected municipal officials (Butler and Dynes, forthcoming). Recent police chief response rates have ranged from 19% (Williams 2015) to 52% (Lewis et al. 2013), placing the MRIS16 police response rate toward the top of that range and well above the averages reported in the broader meta-analyses.

Table A3. Demographic Characteristics of Frame, Sample, and Responding Destinations

	Nation	Sample Frame	2016 Sample	(a)	Response Towns	(b)	Non-response Towns	(c)	Weighted Response Towns
% Foreign-born 2013	13%	16%	17%		17%		18%		16%
Avg. Town Pop. '13	7,916	41,846	113,131	***	115,603		101,955		43,535
% Non-Hisp. White '13	63%	60%	57%	~	57%		56%		60%
% Non-Hisp. Black '13	12%	10%	11%		11%		10%		11%
% Hispanic '13	17%	20%	22%		22%		24%		20%
% Non-Hisp. Asian '13	5%	6%	7%		6%		7%		6%
Hisp. % of foreign-born	47%	42%	44%		44%		43%		44%
% in Poverty '13	15%	14%	16%		16%		14%		14%
% Unemployed '13	10%	10%	10%		10%		10%		10%
% BA degree plus '13	29%	32%	32%		32%		32%		33%
% Home owners	65%	59%	54%	**	54%		55%		59%
Median home value '13	\$176,700	\$267,199	\$250,255	**	\$245,211		\$271,980	*	\$265,867
Median HH income '13	\$53,046	\$64,887	\$58,899	***	\$58,038		\$62,607	*	\$64,583
Canadian Border State Towns	29%	16%	14%	~	14%		12%		16%
Mexican Border State Towns	14%	26%	34%	***	33%		39%	~	26%
% Change FB '00-'13	30%	97%	69%	***	71%		59%	***	91%
% County voting Romney 2012	47%	46%	46%		46%		45%		46%
N	29,509	4,079	1,003		814		189		814

*** $p < .001$, ** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$, ~ $p < .1$

Source: 2009-2013 American Community Survey

Responding destinations effectively represent the sample as a whole and differ only marginally from non-responding destinations. Table A3 compares the demographic characteristics of responding destinations to the sample, the sample frame, and the nation as a whole. The first column represents the demographic characteristics of the nation as a whole. The remaining columns present the average demographic characteristics across destinations within the frame, the sample, and among responding and non-responding destinations.

As Table A3 demonstrates, the sample frame intentionally differs from the nation because the frame includes only the 4,079 places greater than 5,000 in population that are at least five percent foreign-born. Column (a) identifies the statistically significant differences between the sample frame and the 1,003 cities sampled in two-sided difference of means/proportions tests. Having stratified to prioritize centers of population, sample characteristics differ from the sample frame in anticipated ways. Differences between the frame and the sample are appropriate given the sampling method and are addressed in analysis by weighting the sample back to the characteristics of the frame.

Column (b), which is blank, identifies that there are no statistically significant differences between sampled destinations and responding destinations in two-sided difference of

means/proportions tests. The lack of statistical differences indicates that the responding destinations are an effective representation of the sample as a whole. Column (c) tests differences between the 814 responding destinations and the 189 non-responding destinations. Non-responding destinations are somewhat wealthier, with respect to median income and home values. Non-responding destinations are also somewhat more likely to be located in Mexican border states and have slower rates of foreign-born population growth in 2000-2013. Overall, however, these differences are limited and the destinations that responded to the survey effectively represent the sample as a whole. Column (d) displays that the weighted data match the sample frame on a wide variety of demographic and contextual characteristics (see footnote 6 for details).

Characteristics of Responding Officials

The survey also represents the characteristics of municipal officials nationwide, in that respondents are largely middle-aged, highly educated white men with substantial local government experience. As Table A4 displays, 84% of officials are non-Hispanic white. Women represent only 7% of police chief respondents, but just over a quarter of city hall respondents. Demographically, the local government officials responding to the MRIS 16 are similar to the universe of local government officials found in other national surveys.²⁵ They are also ideologically diverse, such that responses should not be biased toward any particular political stance.

²⁵ For comparison, the International City/County Management Association 2011 Municipal Form of Government survey reports that 24% of city councilors are women and 90% are white. The 2012 ICMA State of the Profession survey reports that 20% of city managers are women, 70% have a graduate degree, more than 80% are non-Hispanic white, and the average years of local government experience is 21 (ICMA 2012). The Bureau of Justice Statistics 2013 Local Police Department survey found that 3% of police chiefs nationwide were women, though female chiefs were more common in larger cities (Reaves 2015, 18).

Table A4. Characteristics of Responding Officials by Role

	All	Police	City Manager	City Councilor	Mayor
Average					
Age	55	53	53	59	60
Education	Bachelors	Bachelors	Masters	Bachelors	Bachelors
Years Local Government Experience	21	28	22	11	16
Proportion					
% Women	19%	7%	24%	30%	24%
% Non-Hispanic White	84%	87%	86%	80%	83%
% African-American	6%	3%	6%	7%	6%
% Hispanic	9%	8%	8%	10%	8%
% Other (Asian, Pac. Is., Am. Ind, other)	4%	4%	2%	6%	7%
% Immigrant	2%	2%	2%	4%	2%
% Conservative	43%	60%	29%	38%	36%
% Liberal	29%	9%	39%	41%	38%
% Moderate	28%	31%	32%	21%	26%
N =	1400	488	345	300	267

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