

# Nuevos Residentes and Local Government Language Accessibility

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*The new Latino destinations in the United States face a number of challenges in making local government services accessible to their limited English proficient Latino populations. Public safety has emerged as the highest local government priority for providing language accessible services. The low levels of language accessibility in customer service areas and opportunities for civic participation as well as employee incentives to learn Spanish indicate there is room for improvement in these communities. The findings also suggest that communities experiencing major demographic shifts place a priority on ensuring language accessible public safety services. Pragmatic local solutions take precedence over the lack of federal language policy and the presence or absence of state-level official English policies.*

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Citizens engage with local governments throughout their lifetime. They pay taxes and public utility bills, register to vote, visit public health clinics for shots or well-baby check-ups. They seek approval for home improvement expansions or licenses to open a new business. They call the city when the street lights don't work or if there is a car accident. Public servants facilitate each of these transactions, helping citizens bring order to their lives. But what happens when these transactions break down when citizens cannot communicate in the official language used for public administration?

Newcomers face challenges in negotiating government services if they are not able to communicate with local authorities because of language barriers. Recent immigrants often arrive as monolingual speakers of their native language. Lack of English language skills complicates their efforts to interface with local services. The ability to participate in dialogue with elected officials during official proceedings, read official documents or understand signs and other public safety notices is impaired when language barriers exist.

Should newcomers have a reasonable expectation that public information and services will be available in their native language when it differs from the dominant language used in the community? How have communities chosen to respond to language differences in their communities? What factors should a community consider in relation to local language policy?

As immigrant communities grow in new locations throughout the United States, the local response to non-English speakers varies. Some communities have embraced newcomers, providing access to a range of services in the immigrant's native tongue, while other cities have taken a strong assimilationist stance, insisting the newcomers learn English.

This paper begins by discussing the European and North American context for linguistic rights as an important precursor to participating in civil society. I also discuss the United States' history of language restrictionism. This allows us to see the modern day American connection between language policy and identity. The paper then focuses on state government responses to issues of language access. The final portion of the paper chronicles the efforts of local governments in the new Latino destinations in the United States to address the needs of limited English proficient residents.

### **European context for linguistic rights**

Language is often inextricably intertwined with national identity. In an international context, language policy choices are often colored by the issues of conquest or colonization. Language and cultural suppression are sometimes an extension of majority culture hegemony. Packer and Siemienski (1999, 330) find that "failure of the majority to act with a view to accommodating the legitimate linguistic and cultural aspirations of national minorities can create the sense that the vital space necessary for the community's survival is threatened."

The United Nations is the primary international body to address issues of basic human rights since its inception in 1945. Firmly rooted in the concept of non-discrimination, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) sought to ensure equality of treatment for all persons (Eide 1999). However, this universal declaration proved inadequate to address the concerns of national minorities. In Europe, this issue was heightened following the fall of the former USSR. Obligations of newly formed republics to the national minorities residing within their borders were addressed in the 1990 Copenhagen Document of the Conference on the Human Dimension. The conferees found that the rights of national minorities to use their language in the private and public spheres of their lives are critical to peaceful relations within a nation state (Packer and Siemienski 1999; Siemienski 1999).

The challenge for states, which encompass one or more minority nationalities within their borders, is how to balance the legitimate state interests in establishing an official language for public administration with recognizing the rights of linguistic minorities. DeVarnnes (1999, 307) insists the State must consider "the link between minority language rights and the values of tolerance, coexistence and integration." As the State seeks to achieve integration, Eide (1999) suggests due consideration be given to the three levels of language use: primordial, instrumental and social. The choice of language to use in one's home, which helps maintain an individual's identity, would be considered a primordial concern. A second level of language usage involves the negotiation of the marketplace, where a combination of native and official language skills reflects the instrumental language concerns. Finally, societal concerns lead the State to establish an official language which can be used in legal and administrative interactions.

When a country or a community either establishes an official language policy or where majority languages may exist more by practice than by policy, there are two primary results, language shift or language maintenance (Amastae 2003). Language shift occurs when persons of the linguistic minority adopt, whether by choice or coercion, the language of the majority. Alternatively, language maintenance policies support "continuing, stable bilingualism" (Amastae 2003, 295). National minorities are concerned that State language policies that require language shift may lead to loss of cultural identity and represent lack of respect for the personal dignity of language minorities

(Schmidt 2000; Trifunovska 2002). Conversely, stable bilingual policies, which encourage minority language maintenance, circumvent these issues. Eide (1999) also suggests that vulnerable groups which are subject to discrimination and marginalization deserve special attention by the State. In a culturally pluralistic society, policies that permit and/or encourage linguistic pluralism are an integral part of protecting the rights of marginalized persons.

European countries were forced to address the issue of language accommodation as the European Union (EU) continued to expand its membership. The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), as a result of the 1992 Helsinki Decisions, established a High Commissioner on National Minorities. A long-time human rights advocate and former member of the Dutch parliament was appointed to the position with the implicit charge “to be an instrument of conflict prevention at the earliest possible stage” (High Commissioner on National Minorities 1998).

The Foundation on Inter-Ethnic Relations at the request of High Commissioner van der Stoel convened a panel of linguists, jurists specializing in international law, policy analysts and advocates for language minority communities to recommend “an appropriate and coherent application of the linguistic rights of persons belonging to national minorities in the OSCE region” (High Commissioner on National Minorities 1998). The resultant document, the Oslo Recommendations Regarding the Linguistic Rights of National Minorities, serves as guide for countries developing their own language policies.

Broad in scope, the recommendations include all aspects of private and civic life. In the private sphere of individual’s lives, the recommendations establish the rights of national minorities to use their own language in religion, non-governmental organizations and cultural associations, minority language media, and private business. It further suggests that public authorities adopt size (i.e. “significant numbers of persons belonging to a national minority” (High Commissioner on National Minorities 1998)) of the language minority population and expressed desire for minority language services as a guiding principle for the embracing multilingualism in service delivery.

The Oslo Recommendations specifically address several areas that impact administrative authorities and public services. First, they advocate making civil documents and certificates as well as official registers available in both the official State language and the language of the national minorities. Second, they advise that national minorities “have adequate possibilities to use their language in communications with administrative authorities” (High Commissioner on National Minorities 1998). The implications of language accessibility includes the human resource impact of recruitment of multilingual staff and establishing training policies and programs sensitive to the needs of national minorities. The Oslo Recommendations also counsel as a platform for good civic engagement the proceedings of elected officials should be language accessible. In some instances, the officials themselves may be multilingual; however, if that is not the case then sufficient provisions for translation should be available. Local and regional governments are also encouraged to respect an individual’s as well as the community’s right to use names in their own language. Posting multilingual signs to including local names for streets or other geographic areas is one example of acknowledging minority languages.

When individuals of a language minority are accused of committing a crime, additional linguistic accommodations are advocated. The importance of providing free

interpreters who can inform persons of the reason for their arrest or detention and subsequently during trial proceedings is paramount. In areas of high concentrations of national minorities, it may be appropriate to conduct all judicial proceedings in the minority language. When it does become necessary to incarcerate an individual from a national minority, the Oslo Recommendations urge that some of the corrections personnel be able to communicate with the prisoner in his/her own language. The right of prisoners to use their own language to communicate with other inmates is advised. Finally, they advocate imprisoning someone in close proximity to their residence where their families, friends and any organizational representatives would be able to visit the prisoners. Finally, they urge establishment of a formal process for redress of grievances. In particular, this might include the appointment of a national minority ombudsmen or human rights commission.

In sum, what the Oslo Recommendations seek to provide is a balance between the legitimate public interest and human respect for the dignity of national minorities. "In line with the principles of equality and non-discrimination, these provisions also imply a dynamic participatory relationship wherein the language of the minority may be a full-fledged vehicle of communication in local political life and in the interface between citizens and public authorities in the provision of public services" (High Commissioner on National Minorities 1998).

Linguistic pluralism does come with a price tag. The most recent territorial expansion of the European Union now necessitates the inclusion of 20 languages for all official communications. Annual translation costs after May 1, 2005 will increase from 550 million euros (\$875 million) to over 800 million euros or approximately \$1.3 billion U.S. dollars (Owen 2005; Roxburgh 2005). Additionally, the EU faces the challenge of recruiting new translators, as the current staff is expected to double in size from 1300 to 2600 translators. While these costs may seem high, Riagain (1999, 297) finds that "disregarding or suppressing it [diversity] will surely produce problems which will be even more difficult and costly to resolve."

## **The North American Perspective on Language Rights**

### *Canada*

Dominant interests in both the English and Francophone communities influenced the constitutional and legal guarantees of language rights in Canada. Canada began to officially address the multi-lingual character of their population in response to the 1969 Report of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism in the first Official Languages Act which was enacted in that same year. Citizens were guaranteed equal status before the Parliament and the Canadian Government whether they chose to communicate in English or French in the subsequent 1973 parliamentary resolution on official languages in the public service (Canadian Office of the Commission of Official Languages, 2004).

These rights were more explicitly defined in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedom which was incorporated into the Constitution Act of 1982. French and English were constitutionally guaranteed as the official languages of Canada, and all parliamentary proceedings, statutes and records are recorded in the dual languages. Canadian citizens were also given the right to use either language in pleading cases in Parliamentary established courts of law and "any member of the public in Canada has the right to communicate with, and receive available services from, any head or central office

of an institution of Parliament or government of Canada in English or French” (section 20). Furthermore, minority-language educational rights were established so that children who are language minorities in their province are given the right to receive instruction in the first language learned and to have that continuity of instruction from primary through secondary school (Canadian Office of the Commission of Official Languages 2004).

Three primary tenets were established in the 1988 Official Languages Act. First, the act was designed to “ensure respect for English and French as the official languages of Canada and ensure equality of status and equal rights and privileges as to their use in all federal institutions.” Secondly, official language regulations laid out the powers, duties and functions of federal institutions charged with the responsibility of enforcing the act. And, lastly, the act was designed to support the development of linguistic minority communities and “advance the equality of status and use of English and French languages within Canadian society” (Canadian Office of the Commission of Official Languages 2004).

Thirty-five years after the Official Languages Act was enacted, the United Nations cited Canada’s exemplary efforts in multiculturalism and bilingualism. Their efforts in guaranteeing equality of status, rights, and privileges in the dual languages was cited as a model for integrating cultural diversity (United Nations 2004).

### *Mexico*

Mexico’s primary concern in relation to language rights relates to their indigenous populations. Over 62 indigenous languages are spoken in Mexico today. In 2003 the Mexican government established the *Instituto Nacional de Lenguas Indígenas* (National Institute of Indigenous Languages). The institute is responsible for certifying interpreters and translators for the judicial processes, public health, social development and education.

They also operate a centralized call center so government administrators and others can access language translation and interpretation in the various indigenous languages. Specific information about the birthplace and/or town an individual is from is needed to ensure matching with the appropriate translator. The institute’s translators are also able to provide contacts with translators in Central American countries, which is increasingly important given the growing immigration of Central Americans to Mexico.

### *United States*

The United States is one of 22 countries without constitutional provisions related to linguistic rights and has never adopted a national language policy (UNESCO 2005). As a nation, the United States has an uneven history with regards to official language usage. After the passage of the Articles of Confederation, the Continental Congress disseminated printed copies in English and German, although English became the dominant language of public administration following the founding of the republic.

Bilingual educational opportunities were available in the 1830s, including coursework taught in German in Pennsylvania and Ohio; French in Louisiana; and Spanish in New Mexico. Later in the twentieth century classes were taught in Norwegian, Italian, Czech, Dutch and Polish serving various immigrant communities through out the country (NEA 2000).<sup>1</sup> Restriction of languages emerged in relation to international conflicts, such as banning German educational instruction in the period leading up to and after World War I (Baron 1990). Bilingual education, as we know it today, was

formalized in 1968 when Congress enacted the Bilingual Education Act for language-minority youth, adding Title VII to the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (Schmidt 2000).

Language use assumed an elevated symbolic and political role during the 1980s. The birth of the English-only movement reflected growing concern about high levels of Latino immigration and the strength of the Chicano movement (Santoro 1999). Baker and Giles (2002: 355) reflect that “language becomes a focal point for dissent when dominant groups feel a sense of insecurity due to the perceived increase in the vitality of other ethnic and social groups.”

In the eyes of those assimilationists who supported English-only propositions, reading, speaking, and writing in English defined what is was to be an American (Schmidt 2000). Federal English-only legislation, first introduced as a constitutional amendment in 1981, was unsuccessful, but 23 American states adopted policies in regards to language usage for official state business, as shown in Table 1. A decade later, over 200 legislative sponsors of The English Language Empowerment Act of 1996 sought “to declare English as the official language of the Government of the United States” (H.R. 123, 2<sup>nd</sup> session, 104<sup>th</sup> Congress). See Table 1.

Articulating linguistic rights at the local governmental level may be influenced by a number of factors. Local governments in states that have adopted official English policies may feel constrained by the statewide policy and limit their efforts to make language accommodations in their administration of government. The first hypothesis examines the impact of successful subnational efforts to impose one language, English, which assimilationists see as “indispensable role in creating ‘one people’ of the United States” (Schmidt 2000, 166), on the choices made by local governments within their jurisdiction.

H<sub>1</sub>: Local governments in states with official English laws will be less likely to make language accommodations in the provision of public services.

Earlier discussion of successful official English initiatives suggested that proponents of that language policy may have been motivated by resistance to the perceived vitality of immigrant groups (Baker and Giles 2002). If that supposition is correct then I would expect local government language accommodation for Latinos may be negatively influenced by the presence of immigrant populations in their community. To test this concept, the second hypothesis posits:

H<sub>2</sub>: Local governments with larger numbers of foreign-born persons may be less likely to make language accommodations in the provision of public services.

An alternative hypothesis reflects the pluralist perspective on “social equality [which] depends on its conception of the inherently multiethnic and multilingual nature of U.S. society” (Schmidt 2000, 178). Following Schmidt’s (2000, 179) suggestion that “pluralist support for public policies enhancing and maintaining U.S. linguistic diversity stems from the conviction that there are inevitable social consequences deriving from long-standing and apparently permanent perceptions of ethnocultural identity,” as the number of foreign-born in a community increases the local government may feel an increased demand for providing language accessible services for its citizens.

H<sub>2A</sub>: Local governments with larger numbers of foreign-born persons may be more likely to make language accommodations in the provision of public services.

**Table 1**  
**Study Cities by U.S. States Adopting English-Only Policies**

State	Year of adoption	Study Cities in English-Only States
Alaska	1998, unconstitutional	
	2002	
Alabama	1990	
Arizona	1988, unconstitutional	
	1998	
Arkansas	1987	Little Rock
California	1986	
Colorado	1988	
Florida	1988	Clearwater, Jacksonville, Orlando, Sarasota, West Palm Beach
Georgia	1996	Atlanta
Hawaii	1978	
Illinois	1969	
Indiana	1984	Indianapolis
Iowa	2002	
Kentucky	1984	
Louisiana	1811	
Mississippi	1987	
Missouri	1998	
Montana	1995	
Nebraska	1923	Omaha
New Hampshire	1995	
North Carolina	1987	Charlotte, Greensboro, Raleigh
North Dakota	1987	
South Carolina	1987	Greenville
South Dakota	1995	
Tennessee	1984	Memphis, Nashville-Davidson
Utah	2000	Salt Lake City
Virginia	1981, revised 1996	
Wyoming	1996	
(n = 27)		(n = 16)

Source: Crawford, James. *Language Loyalties: A Source Book on the Official English Controversy*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992. and [www.englishfirst.org/efstates.htm](http://www.englishfirst.org/efstates.htm).

Four key pieces of national legislation did address specific situational applications of language usage. The 1975 and 1992 amendment to the Voting Rights Act

of 1965 provides protection from voting discrimination for language minority citizens. In those communities where the demographic salience of a single-language minority group exceeds five percent of the voting population or 10,000 in population and has below average rates of voter turnout and English proficiency, Section 203 requires bilingual ballots and the availability of bilingual poll watchers (42 U.S.C. 1973aa-1a). The premise that language cannot be a barrier to participation in the electoral process was further upheld by the courts even when the state had passed English-only legislation (*Puerto Rican Organization for Political Action v. Kusper*, 490 F.2d 575 (7<sup>th</sup> Cir. 1973)).

The second major federal legislation was in response to a 1970 federal court case which determined that it was unconstitutional to conduct proceedings in a language (English) the defendant could not understand. The Court Interpreters Act of 1978 (28 U.S.C. 1827) responded to the judge's comment that "the least we can require is that a court, put on notice of a defendant's severe language difficulty, make unmistakably clear to him that he has a right to have a competent translator assist him, at state expense if need be, throughout his trial" (*U.S. ex rel. Negrón v. New York*, 1970). Additional legislation (8 U.S.C. 1224) requires the availability of interpreters for immigration procedures examining both the mental and physical status of foreign nationals seeking to enter the United States. Finally, healthcare legislation mandates the use of bilingual personnel for all federally funded migrant healthcare centers and alcohol abuse programs serving limited English proficient clients.

In August, 2000 President William J. Clinton issued Executive Order 13166 requiring federal agencies to improve access to services for persons with limited English proficiency (LEP). Input from LEP persons and their representatives, for determining how to increase program access that is "practical and effective, fiscally responsible, responsive to the particular circumstances of each agency, and can be readily implemented" was to be central to agency planning efforts (Executive order 13166). Specific guidance from the Department of Justice stated that agencies receiving federal funds should assess the following factors in developing their plans:

1. The number or proportion of LEP persons eligible to be served or likely to be encountered by the program or grantee;
2. The frequency with which LEP individuals come in contact with the program;
3. The nature and importance of the program, activity, or service provided by the programs to people's lives; and
4. The resources available to the grantee/recipient and costs (Office of Civil Rights 2000 and 2002).

The national efforts to expand meaningful access to federally-funded programs for limited English proficient (LEP) individuals may influence the efforts of local governments. If federally-funded programs have extended language access to LEP persons in a local area, a public administration precedent may be set in the community. The third hypothesis raises this issue.

H<sub>3</sub>: Local governments receiving larger amounts of federal funds per capita will be more likely to make language accommodations in the provision of public services.



Thus far in the discussion I have considered the inclusive, multilingual approaches of the European Union, official bilingualism of Canada, concern for indigenous languages in Mexico, and the specific *legislative* and *executive* actions of the U.S. federal government. Language policy developed in both these U.S. arenas supports the pluralist approach, which seeks maintenance of cultural identity through language. I have also observed manifestations of the assimilationist's approach in the actions by 27 U.S. states to establish English-only policies. Given this contextual background, the paper now moves to consideration of the practices of local governments in the new Latino destinations vis-à-vis language policy.

### **Language Practices in the new Latino Destinations**

The new Latino destinations, according to Pew Hispanic Center and the Brookings Institute, are those communities which had a small Latino population in 1980 and experienced rapid (over 150%) growth by 2000 (Suro and Singer 2002). Latinos in these communities may still comprise a relatively smaller percentage of the total metropolitan population, but the burgeoning Latino growth in the past two decades is a harbinger of future trends. Among the new destinations, Raleigh-Durham and Charlotte primary metropolitan statistical areas (PMSAs), North Carolina, stand out with over a 1000 percent increase in their Latino community, while other hyper-growth metropolitan centers experienced over a 300 percent increase. Nationally, 51 primary metropolitan statistical areas were classified as new Latino destinations.

U.S. Bureau of Census designation of metropolitan statistical areas (MSAs) has evolved through the decades and currently includes, in addition to MSAs, primary metropolitan statistical areas (PMSAs) and consolidated MSAs (CMSAs). For the purposes of this research effort, the major city in each metropolitan area was selected for inclusion in the study. The study cities were then selected to represent broad-based national geographic distribution and a balance of communities based on the nativity of the Latino population (native and foreign-born). The discussion of findings then centers upon the various linguistic accommodation approaches embraced by these local governments.

### **Methodology**

Beginning in the spring of 2004 through fall 2005, I visited 31 of the new Latino destinations to conduct interviews with local government officials. The cities included in this portion of the research effort were selected to provide broad-based coverage reflecting the primary urban area in the new Latino destinations. Eleven separate research trips were conducted, grouping the local government visits geographically. The first interview was conducted in Spring 2004 was in Albany, NY, and a second trip included Salt Lake City, UT and Las Vegas, NV. The third research investigation was conducted in Tulsa and Oklahoma City, OK, and Fort Worth, TX. The fourth trip was to Florida and included the cities of West Palm Beach, Sarasota, Clearwater, Orlando and Jacksonville. The fifth set of interviews conducted in summer 2004 was in Raleigh, Greensboro and Charlotte, NC; Greenville, SC; and Atlanta, GA. With the advent of additional funding in fall 2005 I was able to conclude the remaining six research trips were taken to (1) Columbus, OH, Indianapolis, IN, and Grand Rapids, MI; (2) Milwaukee, WI, Minneapolis and St. Paul, MN; (3) Wichita, KS, and Omaha, NE; (4) Springfield, MA

and Allentown, PA; (5) Portland, OR and Tacoma, WA; and (6) Nashville-Davidson and Memphis, TN and Little Rock, AR.

The initial contact in each of the 31 cities was through the city manager's office, or in the case of strong mayor forms of government, the chief operating officer (COO) or business administrator's (BA) office. Each chief city administrative officer was provided by email with an overview of the research project, *Nuevos Residentes: A Survey Of Local Government Responsiveness In New Latino Destinations*. Using the narrative story method of investigation which engages the research subject as a co-researcher in defining a study's parameters, I asked the chief city administrator to identify the city employee(s) who could explain the city's initiatives with their Latino community. This "privileging" of chief administrators view point on their city's responsiveness to its changing demographics provides insight into the importance local government leaders place on linguistic accessibility and other forms of Latino integration (Ospina and Dodge 2005, 151). The chief administrative officer either met with me personally or designated city official(s) to be available for interview during my visit to their local community.

Each interview began with a review of the study purposes and distribution of the overview document that also had previously been emailed to the chief administrative officer. The interview protocol proceeded with my requesting city representatives attending the meeting to provide me with an overview of their Latino community including: What were the national origins of the Latino population? What employment opportunities were attracting Latinos to their city? What were the residential settlement patterns (enclave versus dispersed)? These questions demonstrated the local government's familiarity with their Latino community, an important factor in designing outreach strategies. Finally, what initiatives had local government undertaken to work with their Latino population? This information would provide a contextual background and allow city employees to share about their efforts. While some demographic information, such as country of origin of immigrants, was available through the U.S. decennial census, the research question was posed to extract the knowledge level of city employees regarding their Latino population.

Following that discussion, I administered a survey instrument that developed to elicit information regarding the local government's responsiveness to their rapidly growing Latino population. Survey questionnaire items focused on five main areas of incorporation, including community building, governance and leadership, community outreach, city employment and linguistic incorporations. The research findings presented in this paper draw on the responses to questions about linguistic accessibility.

## **Demographics**

The Latino population in the 31 study cities ranged from 2.5 (Columbus) to 29.8 percent (Ft. Worth) respectively of the metropolitan area's total population in 2000, as shown in column H of Table 2. In 11 of the 31 metropolitan areas, 10 percent or greater of the total population was Latino. In numeric terms, the communities included in the study represent 1.0 of the 5.3 million Latinos living in new Latino destinations in the United States.

Table 2

Latino Population Growth in Selected New Latino Destination Cities, 1980-2000 and Percentage Latino of Total Population 2000

City	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
	1980 Latino Population	1990 Latino Population	Percent increase in Latino Population 1980-1990	2000 Latino Population	Percent Increase in Latino Population 1990-2000	Percent Increase in Latino Population 1980-2000	Total Population 2000	Latinos as Percentage of Total Population 2000
Milwaukee	26,487	39,409	48.8	71,646	81.8	170.5	596,974	12.0
Salt Lake City	12,510	15,508	24.0	34,254	120.9	173.8	181,743	18.8
West Palm Beach	5,353	9,577	78.9	14,955	56.2	179.4	82,103	18.2
Springfield	13,917	26,528	90.6	41,343	55.8	197.1	152,082	27.2
St. Paul	7,553	11,476	51.9	22,715	97.9	200.7	287,151	7.9
Jacksonville	9,879	16,455	66.6	30,594	85.9	209.7	735,617	4.2
Tacoma	4,159	6,670	60.4	13,262	98.8	218.9	193,556	6.9
Atlanta	5,750	7,525	30.9	18,720	148.8	225.6	416,474	4.5
Fort Worth	48,568	87,345	79.8	159,368	82.5	228.1	534,694	29.8
Columbus	5,300	6,741	27.2	17,471	159.2	229.6	711,470	2.5
Memphis	5,730	4,455	-22.3	19,317	333.6	237.1	650,100	3.0
Wichita	9,455	15,250	61.3	33,112	117.1	250.2	344,284	9.6
Little Rock	1,331	1,337	0.5	4,889	265.7	267.3	183,133	2.7
Albany	1,441	3,183	120.9	5,349	68.0	271.2	95,658	5.6
Omaha	7,354	10,288	39.9	29,397	185.7	299.7	390,007	7.5
Oklahoma City	11,767	22,033	87.2	51,368	133.1	336.5	506,132	10.1
Grand Rapids	5,782	9,394	62.5	25,818	174.8	346.5	197,500	13.1
Tulsa	6,291	9,564	52.0	28,111	193.9	346.8	393,049	7.2
Indianapolis	6,430	7,681	19.5	30,636	298.9	376.5	781,870	3.9
Portland	7,541	13,874	84.0	36,058	159.9	378.2	529,121	6.8
Allentown	5,294	12,274	131.8	26,058	112.3	392.2	106,632	24.4
Greenville	391	606	55.0	1,927	218.0	392.8	56,002	3.4
Sarasota	1,259	2,408	91.3	6,283	160.9	399.0	52,715	11.9
Orlando	5,313	14,401	171.1	32,510	125.7	511.9	185,951	17.5
Minneapolis	4,762	7,900	65.9	29,175	269.3	512.7	382,618	7.6
Clearwater	1,263	2,886	128.5	9,754	238.0	672.3	108,787	9.0
Nashville-Davidson	3,257	4,632	42.2	25,774	456.4	691.3	545,524	4.7
Greensboro	1,173	1,765	50.5	9,742	452.0	730.5	223,891	4.4
Las Vegas	12,734	32,369	154.2	112,962	249.0	787.1	478,434	23.6
Charlotte	3,091	5,571	80.2	39,800	614.4	1187.6	540,828	7.4
Raleigh	1,236	2,940	137.9	19,308	556.7	1462.1	276,093	7.0

Source: U.S. Census Bureau: 1980 Census of Population, General Social and Economic Characteristics, Table 59 - Persons of Spanish Origin, Race and Sex; 1990 Summary Tape File 1 (STF 1) - 100 Percent, P009 Hispanic Origin; 2000 Summary File 1 (SF 1) - 100 Percent Data, P004 Total Population, Hispanic and NonHispanic.

The percentage change in size of the Latino population from 1980 to 2000 decennial censuses ranged from 170.5 percent increase in Milwaukee to 1462.1 percent increase in Raleigh, North Carolina (Column F, Table 2). Based on Suro and Singer’s (2002) definition of “hyper-growth” areas, manifesting over 300 percent increase in Latino population between censuses, 16 of the study cities would be classified as hyper-growth communities.

The need for language accessibility for non-English speakers can be related to the nativity of the population. Earlier work by Portes and Rumbaut (1997) indicates that monolingual Spanish speakers are primarily limited to the immigrant generation. By the second generation, immigrants have usually acquired English fluency while maintaining their Spanish language, and by the third generation most immigrants have become monolingual English speakers.

Of the study cities, the largest native-born Latino population, 95.7 percent, is in Springfield, MA, as shown in column E of Table 3. In 16 of the 31 study cities over one-

half of their Latino population is native born; however, in the southern cities of Memphis, Atlanta, Greensboro, West Palm Beach, Sarasota, Raleigh, and Charlotte, 60 percent or more of their Latino residents were foreign born (Column G, Table 3). The largest concentrations of island-born Puerto Ricans are located in Springfield, Orlando, and Allentown where they comprise 44.7, 42.9 and 37.6 percent of the native-born Latino population, respectively (Column F, Table 3).

**Table 3**  
**Latino Population Place of Birth by Citizenship Status for Selected New Latino Destination Cities, 2000**

City	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
	Total Latino Population	Total Native-born Latino	Total Native born in Puerto Rico	Total Foreign-born Latino	Percent Native-born Latino	Percent of Native Latinos born in Puerto Rico	Percent Foreign-born Latino
Springfield	41,359	39,566	17,674	1,793	95.7	44.7	4.3
Allentown	25,970	21,957	8,252	4,013	84.5	37.6	15.5
Albany	5,387	4,483	628	904	83.2	14.0	16.8
Jacksonville	30,414	22,293	4,494	8,121	73.3	20.2	26.7
Orlando	32,897	22,800	9,790	10,097	69.3	42.9	30.7
Tacoma	13,232	8,909	383	4,323	67.3	4.3	32.7
Milwaukee	71,032	47,636	8,599	23,396	67.1	18.1	32.9
Columbus	17,368	10,979	949	6,389	63.2	8.6	36.8
St. Paul	22,696	13,982	347	8,714	61.6	2.5	38.4
Wichita	33,002	19,830	292	13,172	60.1	1.5	39.9
Fort Worth	159,212	91,336	833	67,876	57.4	0.9	42.6
Little Rock	4,908	2,756	57	2,152	56.2	2.1	43.8
Oklahoma City	50,849	27,924	330	22,925	54.9	1.2	45.1
Omaha	29,006	15,347	97	13,659	52.9	0.6	47.1
Portland	35,791	18,814	214	16,977	52.6	1.1	47.4
Grand Rapids	25,814	13,246	927	12,568	51.3	7.0	48.7
Tulsa	28,097	13,912	401	14,185	49.5	2.9	50.5
Clearwater	9,615	4,752	1,143	4,863	49.4	24.1	50.6
Indianapolis	29,641	14,177	693	15,464	47.8	4.9	52.2
Las Vegas	113,237	54,117	1,115	59,120	47.8	2.1	52.2
Salt Lake City	34,102	15,928	156	18,174	46.7	1.0	53.3
Greenville	1,840	824	46	1,016	44.8	5.6	55.2
Nashville	25,291	10,440	753	14,851	41.3	7.2	58.7
Minneapolis	29,085	11,737	481	17,348	40.4	4.1	59.6
Memphis	18,751	7,498	389	11,253	40.0	5.2	60.0
Atlanta	18,582	7,045	390	11,537	37.9	5.5	62.1
Greensboro	10,143	3,542	157	6,601	34.9	4.4	65.1
West Palm Beach	15,007	5,084	1,049	9,923	33.9	20.6	66.1
Sarasota	6,390	2,031	268	4,359	31.8	13.2	68.2
Raleigh	19,522	5,870	385	13,652	30.1	6.6	69.9
Charlotte	40,008	11,971	1,021	28,037	29.9	8.5	70.1

Source: Census 2000 summary File 3 (SF3), PCT 63 Place of Birth by Citizenship Status (Hispanic).

Not surprisingly, those communities with the highest percentage of foreign-born Latinos are also the cities where language presents the largest accessibility challenge to Latinos, as shown in Table 4. The U.S. Bureau of Census (2003) defines a household as

linguistically isolated if no person aged 14 or older in the household speaks English or if its members speak English less than very well, as shown in column D. I suggest an even stricter definition better serves to identify the core needs of language access in a community, which can be seen in column E. This stricter definition includes Spanish-dominant speakers who speak English *not well* or *not at all*.

**Table 4**  
**Language Spoken at Home by Ability to Speak English for the Latino Population Age 5 Years or Older,**

City	A	B	C	D		E	
	Total Latino Population	Percent Speak English only	Percent Speak Spanish; Speak English very well	Percent Speak Spanish; Speak English less than very well	Percent Speak Spanish; Speak English not well or not at all		
Albany	4,590	34.7	67.2	32.8	10.6		
Jacksonville	27,470	30.7	66.2	33.8	14.2		
Springfield	36,490	14.3	55.0	45.0	21.2		
Allentown	22,811	18.0	57.5	42.5	21.8		
Orlando	30,074	13.3	56.4	43.6	22.2		
Columbus	15,484	32.8	48.7	51.3	31.6		
Tacoma	11,315	42.2	46.2	53.8	32.2		
Wichita	28,571	31.0	44.6	55.4	32.5		
Oklahoma City	44,222	23.6	44.2	55.8	33.2		
Milwaukee	62,419	23.9	45.5	54.5	33.5		
Fort Worth	140,236	18.0	44.8	55.2	34.8		
St. Paul	19,749	33.4	42.8	57.2	36.5		
Las Vegas	99,383	18.8	40.1	59.9	36.5		
Clearwater	8,713	17.4	40.5	59.5	37.4		
Little Rock	4,268	28.0	38.3	61.7	37.7		
Greenville	1,708	24.7	41.4	58.6	38.8		
Grand Rapids	22,416	18.8	39.4	60.6	39.0		
Portland	31,384	30.8	36.6	63.4	39.5		
Tulsa	24,300	22.1	37.0	63.0	41.4		
Salt Lake City	29,840	26.1	35.6	64.4	42.4		
Omaha	25,205	26.3	36.3	63.7	43.1		
Indianapolis	26,118	26.4	36.5	63.5	43.7		
Greensboro	9,185	16.1	35.9	64.1	44.5		
West Palm Beach	13,900	8.8	35.5	64.5	44.8		
Nashville-Davidson	22,348	17.7	38.6	61.4	45.0		
Sarasota	5,753	10.0	28.7	71.3	45.6		
Memphis	16,682	19.5	34.4	65.6	46.4		
Minneapolis	25,644	19.9	28.3	71.7	50.4		
Charlotte	36,384	12.9	29.2	70.8	52.9		
Atlanta	17,082	18.9	31.7	68.3	53.4		
Raleigh	17,449	12.2	24.7	75.3	57.3		

Source: Census 2000 Summary File 3 (SF3), PCT 11 Language Spoken at Home by Ability to Speak English for the Population Age 5 Years or Older (Hispanic)

In 84 percent of the study cities (n=26), 50 percent or more of the Latino population live in linguistically-isolated households based on the U.S. Census Bureau definition (Column D, Table 4) with the highest level of isolation (over 70%) in Sarasota,

Minneapolis, Charlotte and Raleigh. Using my stricter definition of linguistic isolation, Minneapolis, Charlotte, Atlanta and Raleigh have the most linguistically-isolated Spanish-speaking population where over one-half (50.4 to 57.3 percent) of the Latino population does not speak English well or at all as shown in column E of Table 4. Albany and Jacksonville have the smallest proportion of their Latino population needing language accommodation, since 67.2 and 66.2 percent, respectively; of the Spanish speakers speak English very well (Column C, Table 4).

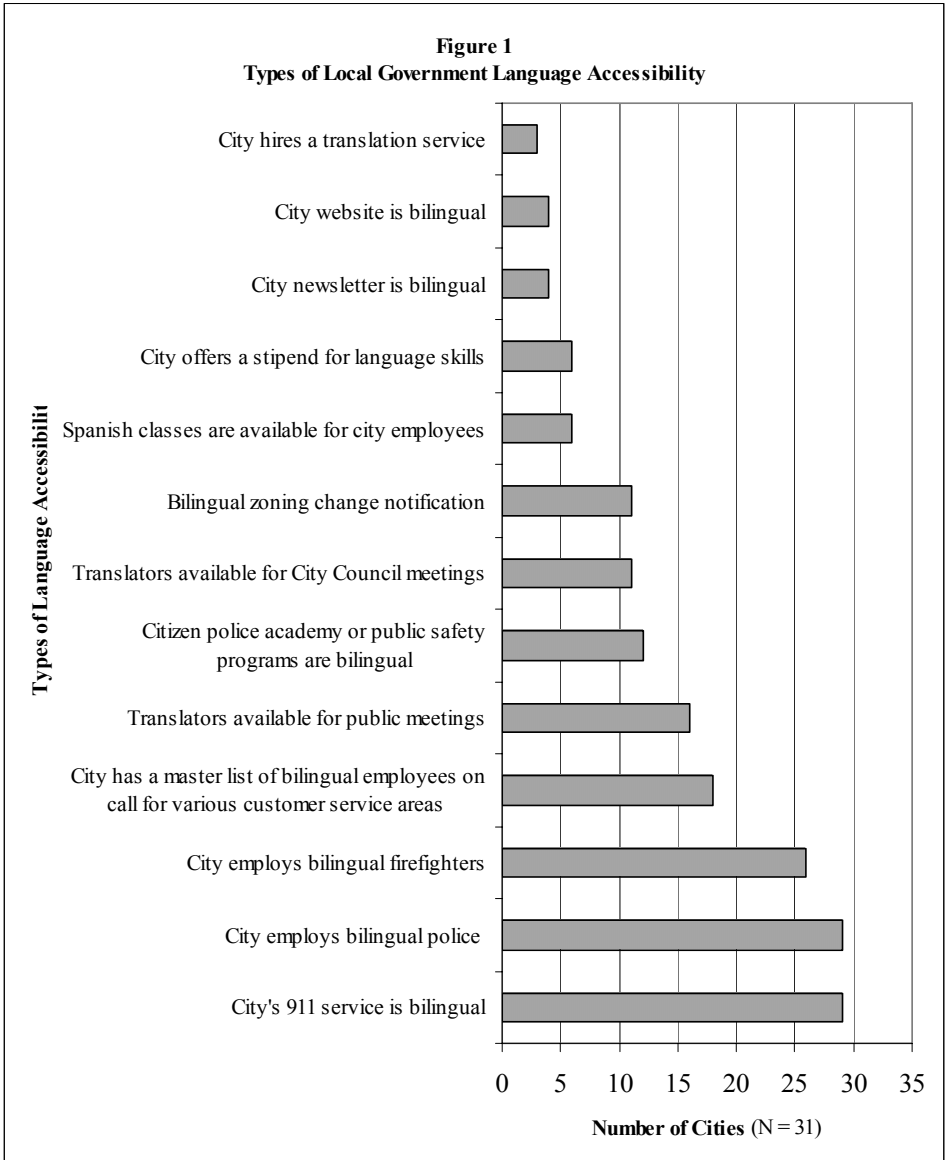
I now turn to an examination of how the linguistic rights of non-English speakers are articulated in the new Latino destination local governments. Smith (2000) finds that given “the limited official status with the treatment of language is essentially dependent on the institutions and organizations involved.” The findings section of the paper will discuss the varying responses to language accessibility in the study cities.

### **Findings**

In 28 of the cities in this study local government administrators were able to describe the location of enclave Latino neighborhoods; identify countries of origin and recognize whether their Latino residents were first, second or third generation immigrants; the primary job opportunities that were magnets for Latinos relocating to their community as well as name key Latino leaders. Conversely, administrators in three communities revealed a lack of knowledge of their Latino residents. They were unable to identify the national origin of Latinos in their community, were unclear about why their population was increasing so rapidly, knew few, if any, Latino leaders, and, in two of the instances were actively seeking advice from me about how to work with their Spanish-speaking immigrant residents.

The 31 new Latino destination study cities provided a wide continuum of local government language accessibility for their limited English Latino population (LELP), as shown in Figure 1. Public safety was the top priority for language accessible services. All 31 study cities provided either Spanish-speaking 911 dispatchers or used a remote access language translation service. The majority of cities also employed bilingual police (n=29) and firefighters (n=26), who facilitate communication with their Latino communities. Twelve of the cities proactively extended public safety services to their Latino citizens through Spanish-language citizen police academies and other public safety training courses.

Civic participation is constrained by language. Citizens need to be informed about issues in their community and be able to communicate their concerns to policy makers in order to actively participate in the civic life of their community. Sixteen of the 31 new Latino cities have translators available for public meetings, and 11 cities regularly made translators available for City Council meetings. Of the cities that provide a citizen newsletter (n=18), four cities publish either a bilingual or special Spanish edition. All of the study cities have a local government website; however, only four of those sites are available in Spanish. Fort Worth was the only city that had employed a full-time translator; however, the position was discontinued in a recent round of budget cuts.



The role of local government in providing service to their constituents prompts multiple opportunities for citizen interaction. Language accessible customer service is critical for a limited English proficient resident to conduct business with the city. Eighteen of the study cities maintained a master list of all bilingual employees who were on-call for various customer service areas. Eleven of the cities sent dual language notifications of zoning change or other major municipal construction initiatives.

A limited number of municipalities offered employee incentives for language skills. Six of the study cities paid a stipend for linguistic competence in Spanish. The amount and method of distributing language stipends varied across jurisdictions offering this benefit. For example, Raleigh offers a one-time \$500 bonus for bilingual employees. Police in Sarasota receive \$20 per week for fluency in any foreign language, while general employees can only receive the stipend for Spanish language fluency. In Fort Worth, the monthly stipends depend on the employee's level of Spanish fluency, set at \$50, \$75 or \$100, respectively. Another economic incentive offered by Charlotte augments employee's salary by five percent for certified language skills. Each of the six cities providing financial incentives for language skills emphasized that bilingual employees had to pass a certification test in order to receive the financial bonuses.

Another employee incentive was to offer Spanish language classes for city employees, available in six of the 31 cities. Some of the classes are offered on site, either during lunchtime or after the regular workday, while other classes are offered at community colleges or local universities. College tuition reimbursement for police and firefighters who successfully complete language classes was another approach used by local governments.

After exploring the range of local government language accessible services, I move now to an examination of the potential factors that influence a community's decision to consider language in the delivery of public services.

### **Hypothesis Testing**

Comparisons of means using One-Way ANOVA was conducted to test the hypotheses that means were equal. One-Way ANOVA procedure produces a one-way analysis of variance for a quantitative dependent variable by a single factor (independent variable) (Norusis 2004).

Table 5 shows the mean local government language accessibility scores for the study cities. The potential scale ranged from zero to 14 based on the city responses to the survey questions dealing with language accessibility. (See Appendix A). Overall the composite city language accessibility mean score was 5.84, slightly below the scale midpoint of 7.00.

Local governments in states with official English laws are somewhat more likely to make language accommodations in the provision of public services (mean score 5.93) than cities in states without official English laws (mean score 5.75); however, the significance value of the F tests is 0.830 (sig. 0.047), indicating I cannot reject the null hypothesis. The local governments with larger numbers of foreign-born population (10% or more) are more likely to make language accommodation in the provision of public services (mean score 6.29) than cities with smaller (less than 10%) foreign-born population (mean score 5.47). As with the presence or absence of official language laws, I am unable to reject the null hypothesis based on the significance value of F (F value 0.954, sig. 0.337).

Finally, to analyze hypothesis three, I measure the presence of federal programs based on the federal, state and local government consolidated federal funds report (U.S. Census Bureau 2005). The physical presences of programs and personnel which must comply with U.S. Executive Order 13166, which mandates language accessibility in federal program delivery, are captured by combining the object codes for grants, which



includes block grants, formula grants, project grants and cooperative agreements, and salaries and wages.

**Table 5**  
**Language Accessibility of Local Government**

	Number of cases	Items in scale	Potential Scale Range	Midpoint	Observed Minimum Score	Observed Maximum Score	Mean	Standard Deviation
All cities	31	14	0-14	7	0	11	5.84	2.311
English only laws								
State has law	15	14	0-14	7	0	11	5.93	2.631
State does not have law	16	14	0-14	7	2	9	5.75	2.049
Foreign born population								
Less than 10% <sup>1</sup>	17	14	0-14	7	0	8	5.47	2.267
10% or more	14	14	0-14	7	2	11	6.29	2.367
Federal grants, salaries & wages								
Less than \$1000 per capita <sup>2</sup>	14	14	0-14	7	3	11	6.50	2.504
\$1000 or more per capita	17	14	0-14	7	0	8	5.29	2.054

<sup>1</sup>Cities with less than 10% foreign-born population include: Albany, Allentown, Atlanta, Columbus, Greenville, Greensboro, Indianapolis, Jacksonville, Little Rock, Memphis, Milwaukee, Nashville, Omaha, Oklahoma City, Springfield, Tulsa, and Wichita.

<sup>2</sup>Cities with less than \$1000 per capita in federal grants, salaries and wages include: Allentown, Charlotte, Clearwater, Ft. Worth, Grand Rapids, Greensboro, Jacksonville, Las Vegas, Memphis, Milwaukee, Omaha, Springfield, Tulsa and Wichita.

Cities with larger amounts of federal funds (more than \$1000) per capita were somewhat less likely to make language accommodations in the provision of public services (mean score 5.29) than cities with smaller amounts (less than \$1000 per capita) of federal funds (mean score 6.50). Here I find that the 0.151 significance value of the F statistic is approaching the statistically significant value of 0.10. This may suggest, contrary to my original hypothesis, that lower level of federal presence pushes local governments to create their own local solutions to language accessibility.

The next phase of the analysis moves beyond the composite language accessibility scores to examine several sub-scales which help elucidate the various aspects of cities' efforts to create a language accessible local government. Initiatives based on public safety, civic participation, customer service and employee incentives will each be examined, based on questions from the sub-sections of the survey instrument.

Notably, all means scores for public safety are well above the midpoint (2), indicating a strong local commitment to providing language accessible services. Whether a state has or does not have official English legislation does not impact language-accessible public safety services (F value 0.041, sig. 0.841). The need to provide linguistically appropriate emergency response systems was consistently high in all communities included in the study. Cities with 10 percent or more foreign-born population (mean score 3.29) and lower levels of federal grants per capita (mean score 3.29) were more likely to make their public safety programs language accessible for predominantly Spanish speaking citizens, as shown in Table 6. However, these higher

mean scores were not statistically significant with the F value 1.485, significance level of 0.233 for both hypotheses.

**Table 6**  
**Language Accessibility for Public Safety**

	Number of cases	Items in scale	Potential Scale Range	Midpoint	Observed Minimum Score	Observed Maximum Score	Mean	Standard Deviation
All cities	31	4	0-4	2	0	4	3.10	0.79
English only laws								
State has law	15	4	0-4	2	0	4	3.07	0.961
State does not have law	16	4	0-4	2	2	4	3.13	0.619
Foreign born population								
Less than 10% <sup>1</sup>	17	4	0-4	2	0	4	2.94	0.899
10% or more	14	4	0-4	2	2	4	3.29	0.611
Federal grants, salaries & wages								
Less than \$1000 per capita <sup>2</sup>	14	4	0-4	2	2	4	3.29	0.611
\$1000 or more per capita	17	4	0-4	2	0	4	2.94	0.899

<sup>1</sup>Cities with less than 10% foreign-born population include: Albany, Allentown, Atlanta, Columbus, Greenville, Greensboro, Indianapolis, Jacksonville, Little Rock, Memphis, Milwaukee, Nashville, Omaha, Oklahoma City, Springfield, Tulsa, and Wichita.

<sup>2</sup>Cities with less than \$1000 per capita in federal grants, salaries and wages include: Allentown, Charlotte, Clearwater, Ft. Worth, Grand Rapids, Greensboro, Jacksonville, Las Vegas, Memphis, Milwaukee, Omaha, Springfield, Tulsa and Wichita.

Overall the cities had low levels of language accessible civic participation (average score 1.23 on the measure was below the scale midpoint of 2.50), as shown in Table 7. Even given these low levels, it can be noted that somewhat more efforts are being made in cities located in states with official English laws (mean score 1.27), with larger foreign-born populations (mean score 1.43), and in cities receiving lower levels of federal funds per capita (mean score 1.50). Since the One-Way ANOVA significance values of the F tests for each of the three variables are well above 0.10 (official English laws F value 0.036, sig. 0.851; percent foreign-born F value 0.793, sig. 0.380; and grants/capita F value 1.484, sig. 0.233), I accept the null hypotheses that the means are equal with regards to civic participation.

Similarly, cities also had low levels of language accessible customer service (average score 1.13 on the measure was below the scale midpoint of 1.50), as shown in Table 8. Those communities which do not have to contend with official English legislation and cities receiving less than \$1000 federal aid per capita are more likely to offer language assistance in customer service areas of local government. There is virtually no difference in customer service language accessibility based on the size of the cities' foreign born population (see mean scores in Table 8). As with the civic participation scale, I find none of the significance values of the F test are 0.10 or below.

**Table 7**  
**Language Accessibility for Civic Participation**

	Number of cases	Items in scale	Potential Scale Range	Midpoint	Observed Minimum Score	Observed Maximum Score	Mean	Standard Deviation
All cities	31	5	0-5	2.5	0	4	1.23	1.146
English only laws								
State has law	15	5	0-5	2.5	0	4	1.27	1.335
State does not have law	16	5	0-5	2.5	0	3	1.19	0.981
Foreign born population								
Less than 10% <sup>1</sup>	17	5	0-5	2.5	0	3	1.06	1.029
10% or more	14	5	0-5	2.5	0	4	1.43	1.284
Federal grants, salaries & wages								
Less than \$1000 per capita <sup>2</sup>	14	5	0-5	2.5	0	4	1.50	1.286
\$1000 or more per capita	17	5	0-5	2.5	0	3	1.00	1

<sup>1</sup>Cities with less than 10% foreign-born population include: Albany, Allentown, Atlanta, Columbus, Greenville, Greensboro, Indianapolis, Jacksonville, Little Rock, Memphis, Milwaukee, Nashville, Omaha, Oklahoma City, Springfield, Tulsa, and Wichita.

<sup>2</sup>Cities with less than \$1000 per capita in federal grants, salaries and wages include: Allentown, Charlotte, Clearwater, Ft. Worth, Grand Rapids, Greensboro, Jacksonville, Las Vegas, Memphis, Milwaukee, Omaha, Springfield, Tulsa and Wichita.

**Table 8**  
**Language Accessibility for Customer Service**

	Number of cases	Items in scale	Potential Scale Range	Midpoint	Observed Minimum Score	Observed Maximum Score	Mean	Standard Deviation
All cities	31	3	0-3	1.5	0	3	1.13	0.991
English only laws								
State has law	15	3	0-3	1.5	0	3	0.93	0.961
State does not have law	16	3	0-3	1.5	0	3	1.31	1.014
Foreign born population								
Less than 10% <sup>1</sup>	17	3	0-3	1.5	0	3	1.12	1.054
10% or more	14	3	0-3	1.5	0	3	1.14	0.949
Federal grants, salaries & wages								
Less than \$1000 per capita <sup>2</sup>	14	3	0-3	1.5	0	3	1.29	0.994
\$1000 or more per capita	17	3	0-3	1.5	0	3	1.00	1.000

<sup>1</sup>Cities with less than 10% foreign-born population include: Albany, Allentown, Atlanta, Columbus, Greenville, Greensboro, Indianapolis, Jacksonville, Little Rock, Memphis, Milwaukee, Nashville, Omaha, Oklahoma City, Springfield, Tulsa, and Wichita.

<sup>2</sup>Cities with less than \$1000 per capita in federal grants, salaries and wages include: Allentown, Charlotte, Clearwater, Ft. Worth, Grand Rapids, Greensboro, Jacksonville, Las Vegas, Memphis, Milwaukee, Omaha, Springfield, Tulsa and Wichita.

Finally, cities had low levels of employee incentives to increase the local government’s capacity to offer language accessibility for their limited English proficient Latino population (average score 0.39 on the measure was below the scale midpoint of 1.00), as shown in Table 9. Noticeably, the pattern for which communities are making greater efforts of improved language accessibility through employee incentives differs from the results revealed in examining civic participation and customer service scales. It is the cities located in official English states (mean score 0.67) that demonstrate statistically significant greater efforts to encourage employees to acquire Spanish language fluency (F value 7.252, sig. 0.012). The presence of federal programs which must comply with Executive Order 13166 and the size of the communities’ foreign born population had no statistically significant impact on the availability of incentives for employees who have second language skills.

**Table 9**  
**Language Accessibility Through Employee Incentives**

	Number of cases	Items in scale	Potential Scale Range	Midpoint	Observed Minimum Score	Observed Maximum Score	Mean	Standard Deviation
All cities	31	2	0-2	1	0	2	0.39	0.615
English only laws								
State has law	15	2	0-2	1	0	2	0.67	0.742
State does not have law	16	2	0-2	1	0	1	0.13	0.342
Foreign born population								
Less than 10% <sup>1</sup>	17	2	0-2	1	0	1	0.35	0.493
10% or more	14	2	0-2	1	0	2	0.43	0.756
Federal grants, salaries & wages								
Less than \$1000 per capita <sup>2</sup>	14	0	0-2	1	0	2	0.43	0.646
\$1000 or more per capita	17	2	0-2	1	0	2	0.35	0.606

<sup>1</sup>Cities with less than 10% foreign-born population include: Albany, Allentown, Atlanta, Columbus, Greenville, Greensboro, Indianapolis, Jacksonville, Little Rock, Memphis, Milwaukee, Nashville, Omaha, Oklahoma City, Springfield, Tulsa, and Wichita.

<sup>2</sup>Cities with less than \$1000 per capita in federal grants, salaries and wages include: Allentown, Charlotte, Clearwater, Ft. Worth, Grand Rapids, Greensboro, Jacksonville, Las Vegas, Memphis, Milwaukee, Omaha, Springfield, Tulsa and Wichita.

**Conclusion**

The new Latino destinations in the United States face a number of challenges in making local government services accessible to their limited English proficient Latino populations. Public safety emerged as the highest local government priority for providing language accessible services. The combined approach of hiring bilingual employees, use of translation services for emergency dispatch and offering Spanish-language public safety classes are designed to ensure Latinos are both prepared for emergencies and are guaranteed appropriate safety protections.

Many immigrant groups come from cultures where the police and other public safety personnel are more feared than to be trusted. Cities report that reaching out to linguistically-isolated immigrants through family safety programs offered in their native

language proved an effective tool in building trust with public safety personnel. Interviews revealed that issues of citizenship, whether an individual has the appropriate documentation to be in the United States or not, were not factors in how these local governments approached the issue of language accessibility.

The low levels of language accessibility in customer service areas and opportunities for civic participation indicate there is room for improvement in these communities. The limited English proficiency of many Latino households presents major barriers in interacting with local governmental authorities. In particular, cities located in official English states are making the least effort in increasing customer service language accessibility. Size of the foreign-born population does appear to create increased demand for civic participation through language accessible services. Contrary to my initial expectation, the increased presence of language-accessible federal programs does not influence the increased use of Spanish in either customer service area of local government or to assist citizens with civic participation in local governance.

Availability of employee incentives for Spanish language fluency presents a different pattern. Here the approach of increasing the pool of bilingual city employees is more strongly supported in cities located in official English states. Although still at a low level, local governments demonstrate a pragmatic approach to communicating with local residents that ignores the statewide attitude towards official language policy. The size of the foreign born population and the presence of federally-funded programs had negligible effects on a communities' decision to offer employee incentives for second language acquisition.

Finally, there is an overall pragmatic local approach to how new Latino destination cities are working with their growing Latino population. The lack of a federal language policy did not preclude local governments crafting their own solutions to making government services language-accessible. Neither did the presence or absence of state-level official English legislation. Local governments seek local solutions.

The highly pragmatic attitude adopted by local government administrators echoes Lipsky's (1980) analysis of street level bureaucrats, where administrative discretion can often smooth resident's interactions with government. Indeed local governments are the street level bureaucrats of the U.S. federal system. The Canadian approach of official bilingualism, the inclusive European model that recognizes all national minorities' language rights, and the expansive Mexican recognition of all indigenous language groups are currently too costly for local governments. The pragmatic localism demonstrated in the new Latino destinations suggests cities with growing limited English proficient populations evaluate their public services to determine how they can best expand availability and accessibility to those residents who do not speak the dominant language. The survey questions included in Appendix A can serve as a beginning point for such an evaluation.

These findings are limited by the relatively small number of cities in the study sample; however, as an exploratory effort this study revealed patterns in local government language accessibility in new Latino destinations in the United States. Further research is needed to see if similar patterns hold true for other linguistically-isolated immigrant groups.

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## Endnote

1. Schmidt (2000, 11) contains an extensive list of scholars who document the presence of limited English proficient ethnolinguistic communities in the United States that support primary and secondary education for their youth in their native language.

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**APPENDIX A**  
**QUESTIONS FROM NUEVOS RESIDENTES SURVEY INSTRUMENT**  
**RELATING TO LINGUISTIC ACCESSIBILITY OF SERVICES**

The following series of questions explores the extent of language accessibility in the public sector for limited English proficient Latino residents.

*Public Safety*

1. Does your city employ emergency response personnel who are bilingual (English-Spanish)? For each of the public safety positions listed below, please indicate whether there are no bilingual personnel, bilingual personnel serving on SOME shifts or bilingual personnel serving on ALL shifts.

	No Bilingual Personnel	Yes, Bilingual Personnel on SOME shifts	Yes, Bilingual Personnel for ALL shifts
1a. 911 operators	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1b. Police dispatch	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1c. Fire dispatch	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1d. Fire fighters	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1e. Police Officers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1f. EMS personnel	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

2. Do bilingual (English-Spanish) public safety personnel receive an additional stipend above their base salary for their linguistic skills?

	No	Yes	If yes, what is the stipend? <i>Please indicate actual dollar amount.</i>
2a.) 911 Operators	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	2b.) \$_____/month
2c.) Police dispatch	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	2d.) \$_____/month
2e.) Fire dispatch	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	2f.) \$_____/month
2g.) EMS dispatch	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	2h.) \$_____/month
2i.) Fire fighters	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	2j.) \$_____/month
2k.) Police officers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	2l.) \$_____/month
2m.) EMS personnel	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	2n.) \$_____/month

3. Does your city provide a citizen police academy or other public safety training programs in Spanish?  Yes  No

*Civic Participation*

4. Is a translator (English-Spanish) available for public meetings?  No  Yes

5. Is a translator (English-Spanish) available for City Council meetings?  No  Yes

6. Does your city regularly hire a translation service?  No  Yes

7. Does the city provide an information newsletter to the citizens?  No  Yes

6a. *If yes* Is the newsletter bilingual (English-Spanish)?  No  Yes

8. Does your city provide an Internet website?  Yes  No

7. a. *If yes*, Is the website available in Spanish?  Yes  No

*Customer Service*

9. Does your city offer bilingual (English-Spanish) billing for the following services?

	No	Yes	City is not the service provider.
9a. Water	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9b. Electric	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9c. Sewer	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9d. Cable TV	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9e. Other Public utilities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9f. Property tax	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

10. When notices of zoning changes are sent to local residents, are the notices bilingual (English-Spanish)?  No  Yes

11. During the regular operating hours of the city, are bilingual (English-Spanish) city personnel available to assist residents in the following offices? Do employees in these offices receive an additional stipend above their base salary for their bilingual skills? And if so, what is the stipend?

	No	Yes	No	Yes	Actual stipend given (\$/month)
11a. Tax office	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	11b. <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$_____/mo.
11c. Human services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	11d. <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$_____/mo.
11e. Economic development	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	11e. <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$_____/mo.
11f. License/permits	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	11g. <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$_____/mo.
11h. Legal	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	11h. <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$_____/mo.
11i. City clerk	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	11j. <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$_____/mo.
11k. Planning	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	11l. <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$_____/mo.
11m. Public Works	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	11n. <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$_____/mo.
11o. Leisure Services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	11p. <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$_____/mo.
11q. Zoning	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	11r. <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$_____/mo.

*Employee Incentives to Learn Spanish*

12. Do non-public safety bilingual (English-Spanish) personnel receive an additional stipend above their base salary for their bilingual skills?  No  Yes

12a. *If yes, what is the stipend? Please indicate the actual dollar amount.*  
\$\_\_\_\_\_/month

13. Does your city offer language classes for employees who want to learn Spanish?

13a. *If yes, Who offers the classes?*  City  college  Private tutor  Other

13b. *If yes, Who pays for the classes?*  Individual  City pays directly  
 City pays tuition reimbursement for successful course completion

13c. *If yes, When are the classes offered?*  During regular employees' workday  
 During employee non-work hours