Beyond Enforcement: Welcomeness, Local Law Enforcement, and Immigrants

Abstract: Studies of local law enforcement actions toward immigrants show that while some cities engage in enforcement, many others do not. The extent and determinants of enforcement have been assessed, but these studies have not evaluated the full range of practices, including welcoming practices, toward immigrants. This article introduces the concept of "welcomeness," develops a framework for measuring it, and, using a nationwide survey of local police departments, examines how widely departments are welcoming (or unwelcoming) to immigrants. The data show that many police departments have consciously and deliberately developed practices intended to foster positive relationships between the police and immigrants and to encourage immigrants to call the police for assistance.

Practitioner Points
• Welcomeness encompasses a range of practices toward immigrants that are often intentionally created, thoughtfully implemented, and found in a variety of communities.
• The dimensions of welcomeness provide a framework for police departments to assess their practices and provide a model for police departments that want to engage positively with immigrants.
• Welcoming practices may improve interactions between police officers and immigrants and may improve immigrants’ perceptions of local law enforcement.
• Welcoming police departments often have a deeper commitment to community policing.

Local government agencies frequently interact with immigrants. The nature of that interaction and the extent to which agencies assist immigrants in integrating into the community vary considerably. For example, some local police departments engage in immigration-law enforcement by targeting undocumented immigrants, garnering much publicity and controversy. Other police departments have practices prohibiting or discouraging officers from verifying immigration status, and many departments have no official stance. Some departments proactively reach out to immigrants in their community without regard to immigration status in order to build trust.

Enforcement of federal immigration laws has devolved in many ways to local police departments (Huntington 2008; Spiro 1997). Extensive research has explored the nature and possible determinants of these enforcement actions (Decker et al. 2009; Lewis et al. 2013). While pressure for enforcement has grown, many police departments do not engage in federal immigration-law enforcement (Decker et al. 2009; Lewis et al. 2013). A majority of police departments have either policies forbidding status verification or no policy regarding undocumented immigrants in their community (Lewis et al. 2013).

In the United States, the integration of immigrants is left largely to state and local governments, whereas in many other countries, integration is addressed by the national government (Bloemaert 2006; Varsanyi 2008). Thus, when a locality becomes a destination for immigrants, any public policy response is a local one. Local schools teach immigrant children; local health departments try to address their medical needs; and local police departments need to build trust and cooperation so as to solve crimes. Local administrative agencies such as the police may respond more positively toward immigrants than elected officials (Lewis and Ramakrishnan 2007), and local public agencies often help immigrants integrate into the community (Jones-Correa 2008; Marrow 2009).

These two tendencies—devolution of immigration enforcement and historically local processes of immigrant integration into society—are profoundly in tension. Local agency officials increasingly feel under considerable political pressure to enforce immigration law. They also face the practical and normative issue of...
ensuring that all community members are served, especially as a lack of service may exacerbate social problems such as crime, malnutrition, and disease.

Many police departments and associations have voiced opposition to anti-immigrant state and local laws. Although five states have adopted Arizona S.B. 1070–style legislation requiring local police officers to check immigration status during stops and arrests, similar legislation failed in 31 states. State police associations, including the Arizona Association of Chiefs of Police, the California Police Chiefs Association, the Dallas Police Association, and the Major Cities Chiefs Association, have opposed state-level enforcement initiatives. Police officers in such cities as Chicago, Los Angeles, Glenwood Springs (Colorado), and Austin (Texas) have opposed legislation requiring local law enforcement to inquire about immigration status (National Immigration Law Center 2013). Opposition frequently focuses on the potential loss of trust between police and immigrants, which detracts from public safety efforts.

Many police departments have taken steps to become more responsive to residents by adopting community policing as an alternative policing structure (Skogan 2006; Skolnick and Bayley 1988). Community policing is a cluster of ideas and practices adopted by many departments to build trust and confidence between police and residents by increasing communication and cooperation (Skogan 2006). It emphasizes forming collaborative partnerships among law enforcement, residents, and community organizations to develop solutions to problems and increase trust in police. The police organization also changes to support these partnerships. Changes occur in management, including policies and strategic planning, the organizational structure, and personnel. Adoption of community policing varies. Some departments implement some aspects, while others develop a formal written plan and restructure the organization to fully integrate these strategies and structures. Community policing has become the dominant model for police work (Oliver and Bartgis 1998; Skogan 2006). To the extent that these initiatives include outreach to immigrant communities, police agencies that accept the norms of community policing may be more welcoming to immigrants.

Scholars have not fully investigated how local agencies navigate these crosscutting pressures. Doing so requires examination of the full range of local practices toward immigrants on a national level. I build on research showing that local bureaucratic agencies are facilitating immigrants’ socioeconomic and political integration (Jones-Correa 2008; Marrow 2009). While the existing research focuses on specific geographic areas, this article examines local police departments’ internal practices toward immigrants. Internal practices are defined as the rules, operating procedures, and formal and informal norms the department chooses to follow. A police department may choose to reach out to immigrants, collaborate with other organizations, or recruit bilingual officers. External factors, such as city ordinances and state laws, may affect the actions of police officers and immigrants’ perceptions of the police department, but they are outside the department’s control.

This article describes the degree to which local police departments have adopted “welcoming” practices. It begins with a description of the concept of “welcomeness,” which encompasses a range of practices toward immigrants, and the dimensions of welcomeness. The range of welcoming practices is then described, followed by a discussion of the implications of this research and potential future research.

The Concept of Welcomeness and How It Matters
Local agencies have adopted a wide range of practices to welcome and integrate immigrants. Welcoming practices are those that treat immigrants as equal members of the community regardless of whether they speak English, are U.S. citizens, or are authorized to be in the country. But welcoming practices require more than equal treatment, narrowly understood. Welcoming practices affirmatively strive to make public services accessible to immigrants given their particular competencies and circumstances. For example, services must be available in the native language of immigrants who do not speak English. Immigrants often distrust police, so law enforcement needs to engage in efforts to build trust (Busch, Latif, and Levy 2005; Theodore 2013). Welcoming practices cover several dimensions aimed at facilitating accessibility by immigrant groups. These dimensions will be described later. The key point is that welcoming practices are in stark contrast to immigration enforcement, but they go considerably beyond a mere absence of hostility. Welcoming policies are often intentionally created, thoughtfully implemented, and found in a variety of communities. Relative welcomeness is the degree to which administrative practices vary from excluding immigrants to helping integrate immigrants into the community.

The concept of welcomeness builds on research showing that the administration of law and policy toward subordinate and marginalized groups varies considerably, and these variations shape peoples’ understanding of their place in society (Soss 1999). For example, Soss found that low-income recipients of Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) and recipients of Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) experienced considerably different administrative processes in these two programs: whereas SSDI was perceived as fair, rational, and rule governed, AFDC was perceived as unfair, opaque, and arbitrary (Soss 1999). Recipients of SSDI learned the habits and ways of thinking of full citizens: they are respected members of society, who may call upon, and influence, government. Recipients of AFDC, by contrast, felt reinforced in their perceptions of their own marginality and government’s lack of responsiveness.

Such studies show that individuals who have positive experiences with public programs and bureaucracies that are perceived as fair, rational, and rule governed learn the habits and ways of thinking of full citizens: government is reasonable and responsive, and they are respected members of society who may call upon, and influence, government. Those who experience agencies that they perceive as unfair, opaque, and arbitrary feel reinforced in their perceptions of their own marginality and government’s lack of responsiveness. Soss’s research has been extended to policing and police stops: while police stops that are reasonably based on a person’s actions and are fairly administered contribute to trust in the police, police stops...
that are arbitrary, intrusive, and not reasonably justified contribute to distrust of the police (Epp, Maynard-Moody, and Haider-Markel 2014). Thus, immigrants who experience administrative processes that are perceived as fair and rational would be expected to have different perceptions of public organizations.

These studies have important implications for local policies toward immigrants. Local administrative policies toward immigrants may vary, just as the structure and implementation of social welfare policies varies. Variations in the degree of welcomeness of local agencies toward immigrants may affect immigrants’ perceptions of government and their place in society, just as variations in social welfare administration have been shown to do. The effects of local policies on immigrants’ perceptions are beyond the scope of this article, which focuses on the preliminary matter: how, and how much, local administrative policies toward immigrants vary from unwelcoming to welcoming.

The term “welcomeness” is drawn from research on homeless peoples’ access to health care, which employs narratives to understand how homeless individuals perceived their treatment at health care facilities and how their perceptions affected their likelihood of returning to that agency for assistance (Wen, Hudak, and Hwang 2007). Some practices express welcomeness. Drawing on the work of philosopher Martin Buber (1970), Wen and colleagues observe that interactions between social welfare workers and homeless individuals can be divided into two distinct types: “I-It” interactions and “I-You” interactions. In “I-It” interactions, the social welfare official treats the homeless individual as a thing or object with no personality or agency of his or her own and with no standing as an equal member of society. In “I-You” interactions, the social welfare official treats the homeless individual as a person, with personality, agency and standing as an equal member of society. Wen, Hudak, and Hwang observe that those who experienced the “I-It” interaction felt treated rudely, ignored, or overlooked. In many cases, they described unfair treatment, power imbalances, and a feeling that they were not viewed as human beings. Individuals who experienced the “I-You” interactions felt as if their concerns and needs were heard and taken seriously and that they were viewed as a person. Individuals who experienced unwelcomeness indicated they were less likely to seek assistance from the agency in the future than those who encountered welcomeness.

These observations closely parallel Tom Tyler’s theory of procedural justice, which observes that people place a high value on being treated respectfully by people in authority (Tyler 1990; Tyler, Degoey, and Smith 1996). Tyler’s research suggests that being treated respectfully is especially important to members of groups that have historically or commonly been viewed as outsiders or of lower status. These individuals are often unsure whether they are accepted as full members of the community. Being treated respectfully sends the message that they are accepted.

Immigrants are in some ways analogous to the homeless, as both are often viewed as marginal members of society. Immigrants may not understand American social norms or speak English fluently, may be viewed with suspicion, and may perceive public employees as being disrespectful or hostile. Agencies with practices encouraging or facilitating positive interactions between employees and immigrants may be perceived as more welcoming than those with practices inhibiting positive interactions or promoting negative interactions. Policies, practices, and interactions with public employees that show respect and acceptance of immigrants as equal members of the community may enhance immigrants’ perceptions of individual public agencies and encourage integration. These expectations regarding immigrants’ perceptions are beyond the scope of this article; it focuses on how, and how much, local administrative policies vary from unwelcomeness to welcomeness toward immigrants.

Variations in the degree of welcomeness of local agencies toward immigrants may affect immigrants’ perceptions of government and their place in society.

Data Sources

The key measures of local police department practices are derived from an original survey of police executives in cities with a minimum population of 10,000 and a foreign-born population of at least 5 percent. The survey was distributed in June 2012, and all correspondence was based on Dillman’s (2007) tailored design method for mixed-mode surveys. Based on the 2006–10 American Community Survey (ACS), 2,150 police departments met the population criteria. A small number of communities were omitted because they lacked their own police department, typically because they contracted with the county sheriff’s office. Valid e-mail addresses were obtained for 1,503 chiefs. These chiefs received an invitation to complete the survey online and were promised anonymity of their responses. After sending three follow-up e-mails, useable surveys were received from 284 departments, for a response rate of 19 percent. Fifteen responses were from cities with a foreign-born population of 3 percent to 4.9 percent but located in metropolitan areas with large immigrant populations. Table 1 shows the percentage of cities meeting the initial selection criteria and the percentage of respondents by population, as well as the level of welcomeness by population. The cities reflect the changing settlement patterns of immigrants, with 70 percent of both respondents and cities in the original sample having fewer than 50,000 residents.

The author also conducted a total of 18 in-depth interviews with police commanders and frontline officers in nine communities. Four interviews were conducted in two states prior to constructing the survey in order to design the survey instrument, refine the dimensions, and enrich understanding of these dimensions in practice. Following the survey, 14 interviews were conducted in police departments representing the spectrum of welcomeness and located

Table 1 Distribution of Survey Population and Responding Cities by Population

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<th>Population Size by Degree of Welcomeness</th>
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<td>45%</td>
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in different geographic regions. Both leadership-level and frontline officers were interviewed. Frontline officers were selected based on the chief’s recommendations. The appendix provides additional information on the departments selected.

**Dimensions of Welcomeness**

Welcomeness has several dimensions and encompasses the formal practices of the organization and how frontline staff act and speak toward immigrants. The dimensions are based on scholarly research and the practices identified by practitioners and immigrant advocates and are closely related to some program elements of community policing (Mitnik, Haltgren-Finnerty, and Vidal 2008; Skogan et al. 2002; U.S. Department of Justice 2008b). Recommendations for enhancing police interactions with immigrant populations emphasize the need to promote outreach to immigrant populations, recruit officers from immigrant populations so as to reduce language barriers, collaborate with organizations and agencies that assist immigrants, and provide practical training to officers to improve interactions with immigrants (DOJ 2008b). Immigration law enforcement efforts negatively affect immigrants’ perceptions of and trust in law enforcement (DOJ 2008b). Community policing emphasizes key professional norms favoring equal treatment of all in the community. Three key aspects of community policing—community engagement, organizational change, and a problem-solving orientation—provide a foundation for welcoming practices in police departments.

Five dimensions of “welcoming” practices were identified. Welcomeness measures the extent to which a department (1) makes its policies and processes available in the native languages of local immigrant populations, (2) has outreach programs to immigrant communities, (3) cooperates with other local agencies and organizations that support or assist immigrants, (4) provides training to officers to improve interactions with immigrants, and (5) enforces federal immigration laws. The premise of my analysis is that the more a department does in each of these areas, except enforcement of federal immigration laws, the more welcoming it is toward immigrants. The five dimensions are summarized in table 2.

**Dimension 1: In-Language Resources**

The first dimension is in-language resources (meaning resources in the native languages of immigrants). This dimension recognizes the need for departments to communicate effectively with and provide information to immigrants. Information is important to members of the community, perhaps more so for those members who are new to the country, its culture, and its customs (Caidi, Allard, and Quirke 2010). Language barriers are a substantial problem during police–immigrant interactions and may affect immigrants’ awareness of law enforcement programs (DOJ 2008b; Skogan et al. 2002). Almost 43 percent of non-native English speakers report speaking English less than “very well” (ACS 2011). Providing written information and online information in languages other than English and recruiting and hiring bilingual officers are recommended (DOJ 2008b).

This dimension is composed of four measures. The first is the availability of in-language written materials, including pamphlets and flyers. Of the departments having written materials, 79 percent provided them in languages other than English. The second measure reflects the increasing use and importance of e-government. Does the department provide information on its website in a language other than English or a link to a translation website? Of the responding departments, 97 percent had a website, and 23 percent provided some type of in-language support on it. The third measure represents efforts to recruit and hire bilingual officers by offering a bilingual pay differential or providing extra points to bilingual candidates in the hiring process. Twenty-seven percent of departments offered bilingual pay differentials, and 28 percent offered extra points for certified bilingual officers. The fourth measure is the substantive outcomes of hiring and recruiting, specifically, the percentage of bilingual sworn officers in the department. The average percentage of bilingual officers was 8.7 percent, with a range from 0 percent to 90 percent.

**Dimension 2: Community Outreach**

Community outreach is a best practice to build trust and relationships and obtain feedback (DOJ 2008; Skogan et al. 2002). Many police departments have outreach programs to immigrant populations. For example, the Chicago Police Department has attempted to engage Latinos in its community policing program (Skogan et al. 2002). Interviews conducted with police departments found a wide range of outreach efforts.

Accordingly, the second dimension of welcomeness is the extent to which the department reaches out to immigrants in the community in both symbolic and substantive ways. “Symbolic” efforts involve public relations communications conducted in the language of immigrant groups in the community. While the symbolic value of communicating in immigrants’ home language may send an important message of inclusion or demonstrate interest in the needs and issues of immigrants, without more vigorous steps, it can be seen as little more than one-way communication. By contrast, “substantive” outreach efforts involve some type of effort to “hear” and absorb the lessons of what one hears as well as to simply speak: to use information from immigrants to formulate policies or practices.

By these definitions, a relatively small but significant percentage of departments reported engaging in symbolic and substantive outreach. Regarding symbolic outreach, 16 percent reported using non-English media at least six times per year, while in the past year, 13 percent of departments reported officers had participated in “meet and greets” with immigrants in the community, and 22 percent reported meeting with immigrant leaders. Regarding substantive outreach, 29 percent of departments incorporated immigrants’ feedback into the development of neighborhood or community policing.
strategies, and 32 percent recruited immigrants to participate in citizen police academies.

Dimension 3: Collaboration
Developing partnerships with other community organizations that interact with and serve immigrants can help police departments, as the organizations can share information and provide information to immigrants (Ortiz, Sugie, and Miller 2008; Skogan et al. 2002). Accordingly, the third dimension of welcomeness is collaboration with other agencies and organizations to serve immigrants or to enforce immigration law. Police departments may collaborate with other law enforcement agencies and with other agencies in different ways and with different motivations (Mitnik, Halpern-Finnerty, and Vidal 2008).

Collaboration can have negative and positive effects on welcomeness, and the two measures of collaboration reflect this. Participation in a 287(g) agreement with the federal Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agency, in which the police department is delegated authority for enforcement of federal immigration laws, is a form of collaboration, but it is unwelcoming because it negatively affects immigrants’ perceptions of police (Theodore 2013). By contrast, collaboration with non–law enforcement organizations, such as public school districts, neighborhood associations, or faith-based organizations, may be a positive element of welcomeness. Interviews indicate that the programs growing out of these interactions are generally aimed at helping immigrants adjust to American society, educating immigrants on the available community resources, and obtaining immigrants’ feedback on improving service. One chief explained that he met with a community of immigrants to discuss domestic violence to help them adjust to U.S. laws. He stated, “they come from a different culture and a country with different laws. We want to help them understand the laws here to reduce conflict and help them understand expectations and laws. It is not about judging, but helping.” The police department in another city was the catalyst for a community-wide effort to help immigrants. The police chief explained that hunger was an issue, so he contacted the local food bank. The chief explained, “We also determined that we needed a one-stop place where people could come and get oriented to the services that are available and the food pantry seemed to be the best place for that. So we organized sort of a welcome wagon. You could go to the food pantry and they could orient you to the city, available services and what is out there that you might not know about.” To reflect the difference between collaborations with other law enforcement agencies and collaborations with other types of agencies and organizations, this dimension is composed of two separate measures: the extent of collaboration with other law enforcement agencies and the extent of collaboration with non–law enforcement organizations.

Dimension 4: Staff Training
Police officers may struggle to communicate effectively with immigrants because of significant language or cultural differences (DOJ 2008b). For example, in all interviews, police officers stated that they encountered differences in cultural expectations regarding nonverbal behavior, such as eye contact, as well as verbal communication, such as the expectation in some immigrant communities that officers should directly address only the head of the family. These challenges may be addressed by police training (DOJ 2008b). Accordingly, the fourth dimension of welcomeness is whether the department provides officers training in how to interact with immigrants. The measure is based on a survey question asking, “Have sworn officers received training or guidance to work with immigrants?” Seventy-five percent of respondents indicated that officers had received training.

Dimension 5: Enforcement
Prior studies show that engagement in immigration-law enforce-
ment varies considerably among local police departments, from sanctuary cities to those that aggressively enforce federal immigration laws (Decker et al. 2009; Lewis et al. 2013). Local enforcement of immigration law has negatively affected relationships between Latinos, regardless of their immigration status, and police (Theodore 2013). Therefore, the dependent variable, welcomeness, incorporates enforcement. Common enforcement policies are coded on a continuum from the most unwelcoming to the most welcoming. At the unwelcoming end are policies requiring officers to confirm a person’s immigration status upon any lawful contact and suspicion that the person may be an undocumented immigrant (8 percent of departments). A somewhat more welcoming policy, but still toward the “unwelcoming” end of the continuum, are policies allowing officers to verify immigration status after arresting an individual who is suspected of being an undocumented immigrant (20 percent of departments). At the midpoint on this continuum are departments having no written policy on these matters (70 percent of departments). Finally, on the welcoming end of the continuum are policies prohibiting officers from checking the immigration status of an individual (3 percent of departments).

A General Index of Welcomeness
The five dimensions were combined into a single additive index of the degree of welcomeness of police departments. Because some survey questions used different scales, Stata’s Alpha command was used to standardize the components to a common mean before combining into the additive index ($\alpha = .73$). This index is normally distributed. Factor analysis confirmed the dependent variable is tapping a single primary dimension.

How “Welcoming” and “Unwelcoming” Departments Vary on Each Dimension
Police departments one standard deviation or more below the mean are “unwelcoming,” and those one standard deviation or more above the mean are “welcoming.” Those between unwelcoming and welcoming are “neutral.” The differences between welcoming and unwelcoming police departments are remarkable (see table 3). This section illustrates the differences between welcoming and unwelcoming departments on the dimensions of welcomeness and in their commitment to community policing.

As noted previously, community policing is a professional norm adopted by many police departments and is probably consistent with welcomeness. Community policing plans are common, but the level of commitment varies. Some police departments say they follow community policing, but their actions and commitment to community responsiveness are largely superficial and symbolic, while others are committed (Greene 2000; Herbert 2006; Skogan 2006). The departments in this study reflect this range of commitment, with 89 percent of departments indicating they had a community policing plan. Of those, 42 percent had a formal written...
The following analysis describes and illustrates the range of variations in welcoming practices. The first dimension is in-language resources. While 32 percent of unwelcoming departments provided written materials in a language other than English, 100 percent of welcoming departments did so. While no unwelcoming department provided in-language information on its website, 61 percent of welcoming departments did so. Similar differences can be seen in training, with 29 percent of unwelcoming departments having provided training to assist officers interact more effectively with immigrants and 100 percent of welcoming departments having done so. While 6 percent of unwelcoming departments offered a pay differential for bilingual officers, 36 percent of welcoming departments offered this incentive. These differences are substantial and meaningful.

Departments reported substantial differences in the percentage of bilingual officers. While 65 percent of the unwelcoming departments had no bilingual officers, only 3 percent of welcoming departments had none. In 55 percent of the welcoming departments, 11 percent or more of the officers were bilingual, while only 4 percent of unwelcoming departments met this level. Leaders in welcoming departments frequently mentioned the need for bilingual officers as a priority. As one police chief explained, “We have 260 sworn officers in our department and I would say 10 percent are Hispanics and bilingual. By the time I leave here I would love to get it close to 20 percent.” This department actively recruited bilingual officers and offered a pay differential to applicants.

Immigration-law enforcement varies considerably. Departments were asked which characterization best described their policy on checking the immigration status of people thought to be undocumented immigrants. The policies were arrayed from the most enforcement-oriented at the top of the table to the least enforcement-oriented at the bottom. Few departments (8 percent) reported they had the most enforcement-oriented policy, which is to encourage officers to verify immigration status whenever the officer has any lawful contact with a person and the officer has a reasonable suspicion the person is unlawfully present in the U.S. On average, unwelcoming departments engaged in 4.7 of these activities, neutral departments engaged in 6.6 activities, and welcoming departments engaged in 8.1 activities. Unwelcoming departments may have not fully accepted the dominant professional norm of community policing, while welcoming departments are more fully engaged in community policing.

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Most police officers and chiefs interviewed did not support greater involvement by their departments in federal immigration-law
enforcement. They also did not believe their community would support more local enforcement. Leaders in neutral and welcoming departments indicated that the general public and elected officials were not supportive of increased enforcement. A police chief in a neutral department in an ideologically conservative state stated, “I would say that probably most of the community is not even concerned about it [undocumented immigrants]. They [residents] are just kind of oblivious to the whole thing.”

Another police chief in a neutral department in an ideologically liberal state strongly objected to police leaders who advocated more local enforcement of immigration law. He favored simply enforcing the existing law. He said, “If the U.S. government had a policy that required me as a local department to enforce federal law, then that is our job until it is changed by the court system. It is not for me to say I agree or I disagree with those policies. And I think you have a lot of examples, especially from sheriff’s departments, where they are very vocal and one-sided in their view [about immigrants]. They are basically stating they are going to violate the law and not fulfill their mission.”

Leaders in some unwelcoming departments reported that their communities favored stricter local enforcement of immigration laws. In one such department, the chief indicated that his community would support local immigration-law enforcement. He reported that the city council has asked his opinion about signing a 287(g) agreement with ICE. Although he acknowledged that local residents probably would favor such an arrangement, he opposed it: “What we decided and what our council back then agreed was that we were not going to be involved in it. That is something the federal government is responsible for.” Still, even in some unwelcoming departments, there was little support for local enforcement of immigration law. Thus, a sworn officer in an unwelcoming department stated that his community would not accept stricter enforcement of immigration law. “I don’t think it would be acceptable to most residents. I don’t think they [residents] would tolerate punitive action toward immigrants, even undocumented ones. I don’t think officers want to do it either.”

Interviews suggest popular support for increased local involvement in immigration enforcement exists in some communities, but many departments have declined to direct their officers to engage in enforcement, and many have formally directed them not to.

Vigorous outreach to build trust with immigrants is another thing. Welcoming and unwelcoming police departments engage in outreach in substantially different ways. Welcoming departments engage in symbolic outreach efforts at a substantially higher rate than either unwelcoming or neutral departments. While 90 percent of welcoming departments used non-English media in the previous year, only 7 percent of unwelcoming departments did so. Similar differences are found in other categories of symbolic outreach efforts.

While symbolic outreach efforts may represent attempts to obtain information or demonstrate interest in the needs and issues of immigrants, they do not necessarily indicate that the department uses the information to formulate policies or practices. Departments also reach out to immigrants in more substantive ways, such as incorporating immigrants’ feedback in the development of community policing strategies and recruiting immigrants to participate in citizen police academies.

These actions represent substantive attempts not only to communicate with immigrants but also to integrate their needs and concerns into departmental practices. Again, welcoming and unwelcoming departments act in substantially different ways. While 82 percent of welcoming departments recruited immigrants to participate in citizen police academies, only 5 percent of unwelcoming departments did so. Seventy-two percent of welcoming departments used feedback from immigrant leaders and groups in the development of policing strategies, while 3 percent of unwelcoming departments reported doing so. Welcoming departments reached out to immigrants in meaningful, frequent, and varied ways, while unwelcoming departments did little to proactively engage with immigrants.

Interviews with law enforcement leaders and frontline officers also illustrate these differences in community outreach programs. While unwelcoming departments rarely proactively reached out to immigrants, welcoming departments actively sought to engage with immigrants. Officers’ and leaders’ ongoing responsibilities routinely included the following:

- Meeting with recent immigrants who were attending seminars at a local immigrant support organization
- Creating programs (including Trunk or Treat programs at Halloween and bike fairs and safety programs) to enhance the relationship between immigrants and police
- Conducting community programs in neighborhoods with large immigrant populations

Welcoming and unwelcoming departments collaborate differently. Collaboration is measured based on the frequency of contacts and the number of partners. Frequent interaction with multiple law enforcement agencies is defined as more unwelcoming, while frequent interaction with multiple organizations not engaged in law enforcement is more welcoming.

Collaboration with other law enforcement agencies is common among welcoming and unwelcoming departments, typically through the Secure Communities Program, a federal program in which fingerprints are shared with the Federal Bureau of Investigation and ICE when an individual is booked into a local jail.
3 percent of welcoming agencies reported no collaboration. Eighty-seven percent of welcoming agencies collaborated with five or more agencies, while only 36 percent of unwelcoming agencies reported doing so. Welcoming agencies also collaborate more frequently. On average, unwelcoming departments collaborated less than once per month, while welcoming departments engaged in collaborative activity more than once per week.

Interviews with police officials illustrate the nature of these differences. A key difference between outreach efforts and collaboration efforts of unwelcoming versus welcoming departments is the extent to which the department proactively seeks opportunities. Welcoming departments proactively identify concerns, ways to reach out to individuals and organizations and actively seek partner organizations. A chief in a welcoming department explained,

Part of their (frontline officers) work expectations is to be proactive in terms of building relationships within neighborhoods; getting to know neighborhood residents, businesses, churches, schools, community groups and others. They have to be engaged not only at neighborhood meetings but in problem solving initiatives within these neighborhoods. Sometimes the officers drive these initiatives and other times they are partnering with the community around them, but I think that’s very important because what it does is builds unity and the expectation for proactive engagement around problem solving, not just crime fighting.17,18

This proactive approach to community collaboration is even found in many neutral departments. Thus, one neutral department focused its efforts on children of immigrants who suffered from poor nutrition and health, had disciplinary issues in school, had low reading and math scores, and lacked affordable after-school activities. The police department was the catalyst for change. The chief explained, “We saw what was going on and we wanted to change it. I knew that was a broader approach than I could tackle myself so we brought in community representatives from the different social service agencies to volunteer groups. I say those first initial meetings there were probably 30 or more groups represented and then we just sort of brainstormed where we wanted to go.”18 The police department’s efforts led to after-school and summer programs to provide recreational and educational opportunities, code enforcement addressing safety and health issues in an apartment complex with many immigrant tenants, and the local food bank developing programs to assist immigrants, including extending their operating hours and providing recipes and cooking information. The police department proactively identified the needs of immigrants and organized other community groups to help address them.

Unwelcoming departments were more reactive than proactive. For example, one chief explained, “We have been wide open to it (collaboration with immigrant organizations). I mean we really try to be participatory with any groups in the community; quite frankly it’s just good business sense. We do things all year long with different groups of people but we really don’t get any requests from Hispanic community groups or some other group, we just don’t get them.”19 This department was waiting to be contacted, while welcoming and neutral departments sought out opportunities.

Discussion

Research on law enforcement and immigrants has focused largely on local enforcement of immigration law. That research has observed that a substantial proportion of local police departments engage in some form of immigration-law enforcement, while many others eschew enforcement. If this were all we know, it would be reasonable to infer that local police departments are either punitive toward immigrants or, at best, neutral toward them.

This research shows that police departments have made intentional decisions to reach out to immigrants with policies to recruit and hire officers with language skills, provide information in languages other than English, and provided training to help officers interact effectively with immigrants. In addition, many departments are part of collaborative networks to build trust with and improve services to immigrants. These practices are sharply different from immigration-law enforcement, and they are something more than merely neutral toward immigrants. These are welcoming practices. They are deliberately crafted to enhance relationships and build trust between the police department and immigrants. Unwelcoming police departments look quite different from welcoming ones.

Local agencies engage in activities to help immigrants integrate into the community (Jones-Correa 2008; Marrow 2009). My research provides a national view of the actions of police departments, and the data show that many departments have consciously and deliberately developed practices intended to develop positive relationships between the department and immigrants, encourage immigrants’ use of the agency, and help immigrants integrate into the community. With one possible exception, the percentage of bilingual officers, they are also intentional. Departments in communities with a large bilingual population may be able to hire bilingual employees without specific recruitment efforts or incentives. The other practices represent intentional efforts on the part of the agency: training must be developed and presented, employees must be sent to meetings, and flyers and pamphlets must be translated. Police departments operate within sharp resource constraints. Allocation of resources to training, translation services, publications, programs, and so on represents a deliberate decision to direct scarce resources toward welcomingness. Welcoming departments seem to have adopted community policing as the right way to police their community, while unwelcoming departments have not.

Conclusion

Welcomeness matters because it is the administrative means by which departments treat immigrants as members of the community deserving of protection and service. Welcomeness may foster a dynamic whereby immigrants learn to trust and partner with the police to address issues of crime. The community policing principles of responsiveness to, building trust with, and engaging with the community are important in order to truly reduce crimes rates and promote safe, stable communities. Increased local law enforcement involvement in immigration enforcement has
negatively affected immigrants’ trust in police and their likelihood of reporting crime (Theodore 2013). But enforcement is just one component of a broad range of practices toward immigrants.

Further research is merited in four key areas. First, what factors or conditions shape the degree of welcomeness? Do police agencies merely respond to local political pressures, or do they sometimes act independently of these pressures, and if so, what factors shape this independent activity? Lewis and his colleagues (2013) assess the effects of demographic and political factors on enforcement efforts; these factors may influence how welcoming local police departments are toward immigrants. We may find that bureaucratic agencies develop welcoming or unwelcoming practices consistent with the political values or economic needs of the community. However, professional norms also influence organizations and could result in welcoming organizations in communities where we would not expect to find them.

Second, can this model of welcomeness be extended to agencies outside of law enforcement? Many other types of public agencies, including schools (Jones-Correa 2008) and local health organizations (Liebert and Ameringer 2013), engage with immigrants, provide important services to them, and may shape immigrants’ perceptions of their place in the community. Extending this research to other types of public agencies will improve our understanding of other public organizations interact with immigrants. The dimensions of welcomeness could be adapted relatively easily to other public organizations.

Third, do street-level police officers support these practices, and how do they implement them? Police officers exercise substantial discretion in their daily work and in how they respond to the person in front of them (Lipsky 1980; Maynard-Moody and Musheno 2003). Understanding how frontline officers exercise discretion and implement these practices will enhance our understanding of street-level bureaucracy and how leaders influence subordinates. Observations of interactions in the field between officers and immigrants would provide a more realistic analysis of welcomeness in practice.

Fourth, how do immigrants perceive welcoming (and unwelcoming) practices? This study did not include the perspectives of immigrants. While agencies may implement practices intended to be welcoming, immigrants may have different perspectives on these actions and interpret their interactions with frontline employees and agency practices in unexpected ways. Interviews with immigrants would enhance our understanding of how these practices are viewed by their ostensible beneficiaries.

Acknowledgments
I would like to thank the reviewers for their clear, constructive comments and feedback, which substantially improved the article. I am grateful for the insightful comments from Charles R. Epp. Finally, I wish to acknowledge the National Science Foundation for funding the research on which this article is based (Grant No. SES-1228272).

Notes
1. Other studies of police executives have had higher response rates, although rates have been declining (Baruch 1999). The response rate is lower than desired, but respondents are representative of the total population based on the percentage of foreign-born residents, population, state, and income.
2. Thirty-five websites were randomly examined to validate the survey results. No discrepancies were found.
3. Two questions make up this measure: “When making hiring decision or sworn officers, do bilingual candidates receive extra points in the hiring process?” and “Do sworn officers who are bilingual receive a pay differential or additional compensation?”
4. The percentage of bilingual officers is affected by multiple factors, including the size of the foreign-born population, immigration status and type of visa, low trust in police, and lack of basic qualifications such as a high school diploma.
5. Interview with police captain, interview 1, June 21, 2011.
8. Factor analysis reveals one main factor (eigenvalue of 2.70) accounting for 73 percent of the variation. The actual value of the additive scale is used as the dependent variable. Results are similar if the factor score is used.
9. The questions were based on survey questions from the U.S. Department of Justice (2007, 2008a).
10. Interview with police chief, interview 5, February 8, 2013.
11. Interview with police chief, interview 18, March 19, 2013.
12. Interview with police officer, interview 8, February 20, 2013.
15. Interview with police chief, interview 13, March 7, 2013; interview 9, February 21, 2013; interview 5, February 8, 2013; interview 4, June 29, 2011.
16. The agencies listed in the survey were neighborhood associations, public libraries, apartment complexes, chambers of commerce, community development corporations, elected city/county officials, public health departments, universities or colleges, public school districts, religious or faith-based organizations/churches, private businesses, ethnic or cultural organizations, government social service agencies, refugee and resettlement organizations, and “other organizations.”
17. Interview with police chief, interview 9, February 21, 2013.

References
Appendix

Interviews

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>New Interview</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>% Foreign Born</th>
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<td>Interviews during pilot study</td>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
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<td>103,701</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>18</td>
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<td>March 19, 2013</td>
<td>62,209</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
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