How Do Organizations Respond to New Immigrants? Comparing Two New England Cities

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This study examines how municipal, civic, and religious organizations in two New England cities—Portland, Maine and Danbury, Connecticut—provide social services for recent immigrants. We draw on data gathered in interviews with representatives of 48 organizations to demonstrate how different types of organizations in each city articulate and act on their responsibilities for recently arrived immigrants. We find that in Portland, municipal and civic organizations provided most of the social services to new immigrants, while in Danbury, civic and religious organizations did. This is because most immigrants to Portland are refugees while most immigrants to Danbury are economic migrants. These findings contextualize studies of single organizations and point to what immigration scholars can learn by studying broader organizational fields in comparative perspective.

KEYWORDS   New destinations, organizations, city, immigration, social services, New England

Increasing numbers of the 37 million foreign-born people in the United States are living outside large gateway cities like New York, Houston, Washington, DC, and Los Angeles (Massey, 2008; Singer, Hardwick, & Brettell, 2008). A growing body of research attends to the experiences of these post-1965 immigrants in new destinations (Brettell, 2006; Fennelly & Leitner, 2003; Hernández-León & Zúñiga, 2005; Massey, 2008; Millard & Chapa, 2004; Singer et al., 2008; Winders, 2006). Scholars focuses primarily on how contextual features of life influence how immigrants, especially Hispanic newcomers, are integrated and/or excluded in new destinations (Brettell, 2006; Godzniak & Martin, 2005; Hernández-León & Zúñiga, 2005; Marrow, 2011; Smith & Furseth, 2006).

The role organizations play in providing social services for immigrants has rarely been the focus of research about immigration to new destinations. This is surprising given that several orienting arguments central to organizational sociology may help scholars rethink how immigration is changing organizations and new destinations. For example, organizational researchers John Meyer and Brian Rowan first posited open systems theories of organizations in the late 1970s to argue that organizations are strongly influenced by the political and social contexts in which they exist (Meyer & Rowan, 1977). The arrival of immigrants to new destinations changes their contexts, creating new opportunities and constraints for existing organizations. Combined with organizational ecology perspectives introduced by Michael Hannan and John Freeman that draw attention to relationships among organizations in given areas, organizational theories offer important insights into how the social and cultural landscapes of new destinations may be shaped by immigrants through the actions of different types of organizations (Hannan & Freeman, 1977).

In this article, we consider how organizations serving immigrants addressed and responded to new immigrants in Portland, Maine and Danbury, Connecticut in the last 15 years. As new arrivals impacted labor markets, housing, and educational systems in each city, we show how different types of organizations—municipal, civic, and religious—perceived and handled social changes that resulted from the continued inflow of immigrants. We find that municipal and civic organizations provided most of the social services for immigrants in Portland while civic and religious organizations did so in Danbury. We identify this variation and then explain it with reference to the demographics of the migrants and other city specific factors.

We draw on in-depth interviews with 54 senior staff and directors from 48 organizations in the two cities. While longitudinal data would allow us to trace organizational responses to immigrants over time, the use of one-time, in-depth interviews effectively demonstrates how organizations in these two cities assess their capability and responsibility for assisting immigrants in local contexts. In other words, we do not map changing organizational ecologies in Danbury and Portland, but rather provide a snapshot of how

organizational fields in the two cities perceived and responded to newcomers at one specific historical moment.

We find that organizations in Danbury and Portland responded to immigrants in several ways. Some that existed prior to the arrival of recent immigrants started to provide new social services while other new organizations were established. In both cities, organizations took on different responsibilities for providing social services by sector. In Portland, social services were provided primarily by municipal and civic organizations that adapted their services and missions to serve immigrants, who were primarily refugees. In Danbury, support for immigrants, who were mostly economic migrants, was primarily offered by civic and religious organizations. Differences between organizations in these cities result from (a) the demographic makeup of recent immigrants (refugees in Portland and labor/economic migrants in Danbury), (b) organizations that existed prior to the inflow of newcomers, and (c) other historically specific factors as we explain in the discussion and conclusion.

BACKGROUND

Following demographic changes in the 1990s, a growing body of research describes the experiences of immigrants in new destinations, but little focus on how organizations in these places respond. From revitalized downtowns to changes in labor and educational markets, numerous scholars have described how new destinations change when immigrants arrive (Kesler & Hout, 2009; Jaworsky, Levitt, Cadge, Hejtmanek, & Curran, 2012; Theodore & Martin, 2007; Winders, 2006). Organizations also change as described by open systems theories, population ecology, and insights from neoinstitutional perspectives. As articulated by Paul DiMaggio and his colleagues, for example, neoinstitutional perspectives draw attention to how populations of organizations adapt to their environments as those environments change (DiMaggio, 1998; DiMaggio & Powell, 1991).

Scale is an important determinant of how new destinations receive and react to immigrants (Caglar & Schiller, 2010). As Caglar and Schiller (2010) articulated, scale—which refers to both "(1) the flows of political, cultural and economic capital within regions and state-based and globe-spanning institutions, and (2) the shaping of these flows and institutional forces by local histories and capacities"—is key to understanding distinct organizational responses to newcomers across geographic sites (2010, p. 7). Since traditional gateways and new destinations differ in their scales, organizations in each are differently equipped to handle the changes that result from new immigrants. While immigrants in traditional gateways often have established ethnic organizations and communities that provide social services (Bloemraad, 2006; Foley & Hoge, 2007; Ramakrishnan & Bloemraad, 2008; Stepick,

Mahler, & Rey, 2009), newcomers in new destinations are more likely to turn to mainstream American institutions for help given the limited availability and capability of co-ethnics (Cabell, 2007; Campion, 2003; Deeb-Sossa & Mendez, 2008; Dunn, Aragonés, & Shivers, 2005).

Scholars who study migration have paid limited attention to how mainstream organizations in new destinations adjust their visions, structures and practices in response to new immigrants. As Marrow notes, despite growing scholarly attention to new immigrant destinations, little is known about how institutions in "locales that have few precedents or resources" respond to newcomers (2011, p. 183). To the extent that students of new destinations have noticed organizations in the "drama" of international migration, they typically discuss how individual organizations rather than types of organizations respond to the presence of newcomers (Cabell, 2007; Campion, 2003; Dunn et al., 2005; Ebaugh & Chafetz, 2000; Erwin, 2003; Foley & Hoge, 2007; Odem, 2004; Ray, 2004; Rich & Miranda, 2005; Zurrugh, 2008). Campion (2003), for example, found that some churches in southern Louisiana began to provide bilingual services and establish bilingual congregations to recruit Hispanic newcomers as members. Similarly, Cabell (2007) chronicled how service providers in Owensboro, Kentucky learned how to work with immigrants "from scratch," since "linguistically and culturally relevant services geared towards immigrants have been virtually non-existent" (p. 5).

We contribute to research about individual organizations an example of how sets of organizations that provide social services to recent immigrants in Danbury and Portland responded to their arrival. We follow Paul DiMaggio and Walter Powell's neoinstitutional approach and identify the population of organizations providing social services to immigrants in each city as a field. DiMaggio and Powell (1991) argued that fields result from the process through which sets of organizations establish new work routines and patterns to manage increasing amounts of information and become aware that they are involved in a common endeavor. All of the organizations that provide social services to immigrants in each city are a field, as organizations interact with each other, share information, and conceive of themselves as part of a common task or effort (DiMaggio, 1998).

Organizational fields in different geographic locations likely develop distinct responses to newcomers, even if these immigrants are of similar ethno-national backgrounds. Marrow (2011) found that many staff in service-oriented institutions located in rural areas of North Carolina were willing to violate governmental policies to provide substantive assistance for unauthorized Hispanic newcomers. In contrast, Deeb-Sossa and Mendez (2008) demonstrated how institutional actors in Williamsburg, Virginia and the Research Triangle—especially health care staff, social workers, and other administrators of social benefits—implemented increasingly restrictive immigration policies and eligibility requirements, thereby refusing to assist undocumented Latino/a immigrants. Likewise, while religious organizations in

some new destinations have begun to provide various forms of assistance for Latino immigrants (Cabell, 2007; Dunn, et al., 2005), those in other new destinations struggled with the extent to which they want to change in order to serve Hispanic newcomers (Odem, 2004). As Marrow argues, organizational responses to immigrants are shaped by a "confluence of external governmental policies" and "bureaucrats' internal professional missions" (2011, p. 183). Similarly, Cabell argues that factors including "the actions and motivations of institutions, their institutional properties, relationship to the state, and level of formality" all influence how organizations in different fields respond (2007, p. 9).

We situate the organizations we study in the distinct immigration histories of Portland and Danbury. In Portland, increasing number of foreign-born people resulted from influxes of refugees and immigrants from Asia and Africa. As a refugee resettlement area, the number of immigrants in Maine generally and Portland specifically has been increasing since the 1980s when large numbers of Laotians and Cambodians were resettled there (Canniff, 2001). In the 1990s, the majority of new immigrants came from Yugoslavia, the former Soviet Union, and parts of Africa. Since 2000, the majority have come from Africa, particularly Somalia, Sudan, and Ethiopia. About 8% of Portland residents were foreign-born in 2000 and 53 different languages were spoken by students in the Portland public school system, which has the largest number of ESL (English as a second language) students in the state. Many of the city's immigrants work in meat- or fish-packing plants, factories, or the service and medical sectors. Portland has also become a destination for refugees relocating from their original settlement sites. While there are no official figures on secondary migrants, unofficial estimates suggest there may be as many as 10,000 divided between Portland and the nearby city of Lewiston (Allen, 2006).

In Danbury, the foreign-born population grew between 1990 and 2000 largely as a result of immigrants from South America and Asia. For most of its history, Danbury integrated "White ethnic" groups—primarily from Ireland, Italy, and Poland. After 1965, there was sharp rise in people of Portuguese ancestry, primarily from Europe, and a few from Cape Verde. The Portuguese remain one of the city's largest immigrant groups. Over the past dozen years, the city became home to large numbers of foreign-born residents from Latin America and Asia, including Cambodia, India, the Dominican Republic, Brazil, and Ecuador. City officials estimate that the foreign-born population is much larger than the 32% estimated by the Census, because there are approximately 12,000 to 15,000 undocumented residents in the city. According to the Mayor's 2006/7 annual report, over 60 nationalities speaking over 45 different languages, lived in Danbury. While the majority of foreign-born people in Portland are refugees, the majority in Danbury are economic migrant—largely from Brazil—who work as day laborers, in service jobs, or in a range of more professional occupations.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research focused on Portland and Danbury as two similarly sized New England cities that had received large numbers of immigrants in the years before this research was conducted. The different compositions of refugees and economic migrants in each city made for analytically interesting comparisons that we believe can highlight the range of factors that shape both the ways cities respond to new immigrants and the experiences of those immigrants in these cities.

We began this research by identifying all the organizations in Portland and Danbury that provided social services for immigrants between 2006 and 2008 when the data was gathered. There was no sampling frame, so we located organizations inductively through key informants, local newspapers, snowball sampling, and published lists of organizations in each city. They included municipal organizations supported by local, state and federal governments, civic organizations generally supported through private donations, and religious organizations tied to a local or national religious organization. Given the small size of each city, we are confident that we located most of the organizations working with immigrants during this time period.

We aimed to interview representatives of each organization and are certain we interviewed representatives of the organizations that were the largest and most dominant during the time period in question. Researchers conducted in-depth interviews with representatives, most often directors or senior level staff, from 23 organizations in Portland and 25 organizations in Danbury. Interviewing directors or senior level staff who had worked in many of these organizations for an extended period helped us delineate the impact of recent immigrants on organizations. While junior and other frontline staff working with immigrants might understand the current needs and desires of recent immigrants (Deeb-Sossa & Mendez, 2008), senior staff had a better understanding of how organizations shifted their attention and developed new services for new immigrant groups over time.

In Portland we learned about five municipal organizations, 12 civic organizations and six religious or faith-based organizations. In Danbury, we learned about six municipal organizations, seven civic organizations, and 12 religious and faith-based organizations. Organizations in the municipal sector received most of their funding from the city/state and are accountable to the city or state administration. They included public schools, city departments, the mayor's office, and some ESL programs. Civic organizations are those that may receive some funding from the city/state but receive most from other sources. They do not have religious mission statements and include ethnic and culturally based organizations, some legal advocacy groups, some health groups, and some social service and counseling organizations. Groups in the religious sector are those with religious/spiritual mission statements including local congregations and religious social service organizations like

the Salvation Army. We interviewed 25 people from all of these organizations in Portland and 29 people in Danbury.

Interviews followed a semistructured interview guide that included questions about the purpose, history, and mission of the organization as well as the services they offer, their client populations, and their experiences and observations about immigrants' experiences. The data included here came primarily from interview questions about (a) when the organization decided to work with the increasing number of immigrants in the city, (b) what kinds of services the organization provided for immigrants, (c) how the organization made decisions about the services that it provided, (d) how the organization was structured to provide these services, and (e) the opportunities, changes and challenges that the organization encountered in the process of serving recent immigrants. We also asked interviewees for details about how they and their affiliated organizations perceived the needs of immigrants and what they saw in the future for their organization and for immigrants in the city. Interviews typically lasted between fifty minutes and two hours and were digitally recorded and professionally transcribed. We use the real names of each organization but do not name the representative(s) interviewed.[1]

Data was analyzed inductively following the principles of grounded theory (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). We worked collaboratively using Atlas-TI software to develop and refine a set of codes, working together with intracity and intercity crosschecks to ensure that analytic categories were applied consistently across interviews as well as locations. The coded data was read in parallel with historical materials to facilitate our understandings of each city's particular context.

FINDINGS

Changes to Existing Organizations and the Founding of New Organizations

Recent immigrants brought changes and challenges to many organizations in both cities. Organizations that existed before large numbers of immigrants arrived broadened their missions, and a few new organizations were started to meet specific needs. Most of the organizations currently working with immigrants in Portland and Danbury existed prior to the arrival of new immigrants. They were initially established around issues like childcare, education, and health for native-born residents. Historically, they embraced humanitarian values and aimed to serve everyone in need rather than focusing on specific groups.

According to representatives of existing organizations, they did not expect immigrants to become their primary clients when they were founded. In fact, the varied needs of immigrants were rarely on the radar of many

organizations before new immigrants began to arrive. As a representative of Catholic Charities Fairfield County in Danbury reported, "immigration was not even in our mission statement several years ago." Yet as immigrants arrived, these organizations began to learn about their social and cultural needs and to include them as one of the primary groups to whom they consistently provide services. As a representative of The Root Cellar—a Christian organization in Portland—explained:

> My understanding is that Catholic Charities identified Portland as one of the refugee resettlement neighborhoods. And so when that all started to play out and become a reality, our dynamics shifted too, where we were serving fewer White people, where you didn't have the language barrier or the cultural barrier or a lot of the same needs. And it all shifted. And you know a lot of what we've been doing over the past 6, 7 years is adapting to that shift. Where now 90% of the people we serve are from Ethiopia, Sudan, Somalia, and so we have to understand where they're coming from culturally, what are their needs. We never used to teach citizenship or English, for example.

Against this background, many established organizations created new strategies to overcome linguistic, social, and cultural barriers and to provide services for immigrant clients effectively. They began to hire new staff who spoke the native languages of immigrants. A representative of United Way in Portland explained, "since language was a matter of equal access and services, and language barrier was and is still an issue, we decided to try to tackle it from the interpreting and translating services point." Many organizations in Portland and Danbury also recognized that it requires some basic English speaking and writing abilities to interact with mainstream American institutions, and that a lot of the difficulties that immigrants encounter stem from their unfamiliarity and discomfort with the use of English. Many began—and are still in the process of—offering ESL classes to help immigrants acquire English speaking and writing skills. The Portuguese Cultural Center in Danbury is one such organization. As a representative explained:

> Working with, especially working with people that don't speak English, it's even more difficult because they don't have the language skills so I sit and you know make the calls for them, whereas with the English-speaking clients you just give them the referral and they go and do it themselves. . . . So it's a lot, it's very time consuming. Certainly, we are planning on starting some programs . . . For example, language, the English language, good teachers for people to learn English.

Aside from expanding their non-English language services and developing ESL programs, several organizations in Portland and Danbury that existed before large numbers of immigrants arrived developed new organizational

goals and identities in the process of helping recently arrived immigrants. A representative from the Danbury Children First Initiative reported that in the process of working with first generation immigrant parents, they realized that a lot of difficulties that immigrants experience come from biases and misunderstandings held by nonimmigrants. Consequently, in addition to providing childcare support for immigrant parents as they do for native-born parents, the organization began to identify itself as a "catalyst in the community" seeking to eradicate hostility towards new immigrant groups. A representative explained:

> Because we really see our role as a catalyst in the community . . . we want to listen to parents and promote that they are supported in a way that is appropriate, and also that parents are partners in the design, delivery and evaluation of services and education, and so, we have an awareness component, a public awareness component, where we're actually trying to move public will more toward supporting the family, and in a way that is culturally and linguistically responsive as well.

Like at the Danbury Children First Initiative, the arrival of recent immigrants brought new issues to the agendas of other organizations as they became aware that immigrants' collective well-being would not improve if the discrimination of mainstream society towards new immigrant groups was not addressed.

Several new social service organizations were also founded in Portland and Danbury in response to recent immigrants. In Portland, Immigrant Legal Advocacy was established to provide legal consultation and asylum services and to attempt to improve the legal climate for immigrants living in Maine. Likewise, a representative of an Assembly of God congregation in Danbury explained that his congregation was started in response to the social, cultural, and spiritual needs of increasing numbers of Brazilian immigrants. Many recently arrived Brazilian immigrants experienced severe social isolation and cultural alienation, he explained, and had unique needs that were not being fully satisfied in other nonimmigrant churches. He explained:

> This church started in 2004. There was a group of people from the Assembleia de Deus from Brazil, about 12 people that were members and 6 people who were starting to frequent, so 18 people. So they wanted a pastor to start the church with them, the Assembleia de Deus with some characteristics of the church in Brazil that the churches in Danbury didn't have. So we started the church because of the need based on these 18 people.

The new organizations established to serve recent immigrants belong to different sectors in each city. We identified six new organizations in Portland established to serve recent immigrants, four in the municipal sector,

and two in the civic sector. In Danbury, we identified seven new organizations founded to provide services to immigrants, one civic, one municipal, and five religious. These patterns suggested that municipal organizations in Portland play a more significant role in assisting immigrants while religious organizations are the major institutional actors in Danbury. We next explore these patterns in detail.

Variation by Sector in Portland and Danbury

MUNICIPAL ORGANIZATIONS

Organizations in the municipal, civic, and religious sectors in Portland and in Danbury responded differently when large numbers of immigrants arrived in their cities. In Portland, municipal organizations were the primary institutional actors that identified and addressed a myriad of issues for the mostly refugee population, including food, housing, employment, transportation, language, medical services, and children's education. Table 1 describes all of the major services that municipal organizations in each city performed.

Municipal organizations in both Danbury and Portland provided medical consultation, ESL classes and interpretation/translation assistance. In addition, municipal organizations in Portland helped recent immigrants deal with other needs. Representatives of the Multilingual and Multicultural Program of the Portland Public Schools, City/Refugee and Immigrant Services, and the Department of Health and Human Services all reported helping recent immigrants solve problems with housing. For example, the representative of the Multilingual and Multicultural Program of the Portland Public Schools reported, "because most of the immigrants and refugees need to learn where the affordable housing is located," their organization consistently provided

TABLE 1 Services Provided by Municipal Organizations

| | Municipal organizations | |
	Portland	Danbury
Similarities	• Medical services • ESL classes • Interpretation/translation services	• Medical services • ESL classes • Interpretation/translation services
Differences	• Housing • Food • Raising the public awareness of immigrants' needs • Training staff to be sensitive to issues such as racism and cultural difference	• Helping immigrants set up their own business

Note. ESL = English as a second language.

housing advice and assistance for immigrants and refugees. To eradicate the stereotypes and discrimination against immigrants, both the Multilingual and Multicultural Program of the Portland Public Schools and City Refugee and Immigrant Services in Portland also took on the responsibilities of raising public awareness about racism and cultural differences among the population at large. As a representative of City Refugee and Immigrant Services reported, "over a two or maybe three-year community teaching and education, five, six, seven hundred people started being able to correct other people's stereotypes." This representative emphasized, "once somebody tells a joke or a stereotype about Somalis, they can say, 'Well wait a second, let me tell you about the experience I had and what somebody told me and they're not like that at all.'"

In comparison with municipal organizations in Portland, those in Danbury provided fewer services for immigrants around food, housing and discrimination. The city focused instead almost exclusively on business ownership through the Office of Economic Development for the City of Danbury which was committed to helping immigrants establish their own businesses. A representative from this office reported that most immigrants in Danbury are economic migrants who come to the United States for work opportunities. He explained that many immigrant businesses failed because "a minority language business owner usually comes in, sets up his business, doesn't necessarily have a business plan, doesn't necessarily have the proper funding and doesn't necessarily do any marketing." Hence, the Office of Economic Development in Danbury partnered with the Greater Danbury Chamber of Commerce and Connecticut Small Business Center to conduct a 10-week seminar in Spanish in order "to develop minority-language business entrepreneurs."

CIVIC ORGANIZATIONS

Civic organizations in Portland and Danbury also provided assistance—such as ESL classes, interpretation/translation services, and consultation around children's education—that helped recent immigrants address basic needs in everyday life. Representatives of both Portland West and Danbury Children First Initiative, for example, were aware that many immigrant parents had difficulty helping their children handle issues at school. Thus, both provided consultation services in order to help immigrant parents understand how to interact with staff and teachers at school. Civic organizations in both cities also emphasized the importance of creating an immigrant-friendly environment by improving public awareness of immigrants' needs, desires and cultural backgrounds. For example, a representative from the African Culture and Learning Center in Portland stressed the importance of helping the public understand cultural differences between immigrant communities and mainstream American society. As a representative explained, "a lot of

TABLE 2 Services Provided by Civic Organizations

	Civic organizations	
	Portland	Danbury
Similarities	• ESL classes • Interpretation/translation services • Issues about immigrant children's education • Raising the public awareness of immigrants' needs	• ESL classes • Interpretation/translation services • Issues about immigrant children's education • Raising the public awareness of immigrants' needs
Differences	• Legal consultation • Medical services (including mental health services) • Housing/asylum services	

Note. ESL = English as a second language.

problems result from differences between cultures." Table 2 describes the services provided to immigrants by civic organizations in Portland and Danbury.

Civic organizations provided similar services in these two cities. Organizations in Portland provided additional services, however, in part because providers in Portland assumed and expected refugees in the city to have greater needs than voluntary labor or economic migrants in Danbury. The city also received funds, as a refugee resettlement area, to provide these services that Danbury did not. As a result, civic organizations in Portland provide asylum services, legal assistance and mental health consultation attending to the particular needs of refugees, especially those from Somalia. The African Culture and Learning Center, for example, worked with other organizations such as Catholic Charities and the Salvation Army to provide asylum, food and health services for Somali and Sudanese refugees. Likewise, a representative from Immigration Legal Advocacy reported that one of their primary missions over the past few years had been providing asylum services for Somali refugees:

> And right now our single largest population or single largest country being served is refugees from Somalia. . . . I think with the pro bono project it really became an asylum project because that's what pro bono attorneys like to do, is asylum work. So, you know, it ran the garret there were some Central American cases because there were still, the war was still going on in Guatemala etc. when it started. But more African immigrants, I think the asylum project was more heavily based or focused on African refugees because that just happened to be who was coming through the doors.

These services we found in Portland were not reported on in our interviews with representatives of civic organizations in Danbury, although some of these services—particularly legal assistance—were needed by some "voluntary" immigrant residents.

RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATIONS

Like municipal organizations, religious organizations in Portland and Danbury also responded differently to the arrival of immigrants. Immigrants transformed some religious gatherings in each city from monolingual to multilingual gatherings and received varying levels of assistance from groups in each city. While a few religious organizations in Portland provided food and housing for recent immigrants, many more religious organizations in Danbury did, including the Association of Religious Communities, St. Peter's Parish, Catholic Charities Fairfield County, the Free Methodist, and the Brazilian Catholic Center. All the services provided by congregations and faith-based groups in each city are summarized in Table 3.

Immigrants in Danbury received substantive assistance from religious organizations that provided more services—such as loans, legal consultations, ESL classes, and political advocacy—to fulfill immigrants' various needs than in Portland. For example, religious institutions such as Salvation Army played an active role in assisting recently arrived immigrants in Danbury. As a representative explained:

> I think there was a purpose to reach out to the immigrant community since we do offer also social services. And they observed that there was a lot of Hispanics coming through the social service program and there's a lot of Hispanics participating and also Portuguese speaking

TABLE 3 Services Provided by Religious Organizations

	Congregations and faith-based groups	
	Portland	Danbury
Similarities	● Providing multilingual sermons	● Providing multilingual sermons
	● Housing	● Housing
	● Food	● Food
Differences		● Loans
		● ESL classes
		● Immigrant children's education issues
		● Legal consultation
		● Political advocacy for immigrants

Note. ESL = English as a second language.

> participating in the social services program. . . . We have a program called
> the Bread program we also have a program called, that I started, called
> Coffee/Bread and Prayer. Because we distribute bread twice a week from
> donations and a lot of people come for that. And a lot of our clients we
> serve are Hispanics.

Likewise, religious organizations in Danbury such as St. Peter's Parish,
Philadelphia Church and Faith Church provided ESL classes to help im-
migrants and their children improve their English competency and adapt in
Danbury. Also, organizations in Danbury, such as the Association of Reli-
gious Communities, St. Peter's Parish and Four-Square Gospel, stressed the
importance of their role in advocating for improving immigrants' collective
situations. According to a representative of St. Peter's Parish:

> I think that a lot of immigrants' problems have something [to do] with
> the Federal Government. The Federal Government needs to resolve this.
> . . . What matters in the lives of the Brazilians is immigration law. What
> we could do, the bishops and the priests that are united to battle in
> Washington with the Congress to have laws for the immigration. Those
> have the power, we cannot do anything. So the future here is in the
> hands of the country to accept the immigrants.

Other congregations and faith-based groups in Danbury also articulated sim-
ilar sentiments about how they should advocate for immigrants.

DISCUSSION

The demographics of the immigrants themselves explain many of the
differences we observed between these cities. Unlike studies that focus
on the new organizations immigrants establish to help their co-ethnics
(Ramakrishnan & Bloemraad, 2008), it is important first to note that most of
the organizations we learned about existed before large numbers of immi-
grants arrived. The limited number of organizations founded by immigrants
in Portland and Danbury may reflect the lack of necessary resources—time,
money, social networks, cultural competency, and a critical mass of commit-
ted members—in immigrant communities needed to establish and sustain or-
ganizations that can provide institutional support to co-ethnics. The absence
of such resources was especially evident in Portland where representatives
consistently emphasized that many immigrants to the city were refugees who
arrived empty-handed with traumatic premigratory experiences and few re-
sources to begin again. As a representative of City, Refugee & Immigrant
Services in Portland explained:

> The trauma of growing up in a refugee camp, the abuse, the what-
> ever, it comes to light and so we're now really focused on the mental
> health aspect of working with refugees. . . . And many refugees came here
> with nothing. Telling refugees don't commit crimes, don't do this, don't
> do that—means nothing. 'Cause you haven't given them the tools. You
> haven't put them on the same footing they should be like other people.
> And now you're not providing them what they need. And you're not
> promoting a good society to be by educating them.

Social service providers in Danbury often assumed that the economic migrants there had more resources than refugees in Portland. Few municipal organizations and fewer civic organizations than in Portland provided assistance for them, leaving religious organizations to offer needed services. Unlike refugees in Portland, in other words, social service providers in Danbury assumed that labor migrants came to the States voluntarily seeking economic prosperity and had more resources at their disposal, though this was not always the case. Given these assumptions, Portland was often better prepared as a city through a wider range of organizations to assist their recent arrivals than was Danbury.

Money also played an important role as municipal leaders in Portland received funds as a refugee resettlement area to assist new arrivals that city leaders in Danbury did not receive. As a representative of the Public Schools Office of Multilingual and Multi-Cultural Program in Portland explained:

> Most of the refugees resettled in Maine are resettled in Portland. And so
> when the first director came in, I think it was in 1984 and established the
> program through a Title Seven grant from the U.S. Department of Educa-
> tion, and you know, it had the Title Seven, which is Office of Bilingual
> Education and Minority Language Affairs-OBEMLA-that was the acronym
> before, for the longest time was the source of funding for programs for
> English language learners. And that was for the longest time that was the
> source of funding until it was dismantled in 2001 when they re-authorized
> the education—elementary and secondary education act and put in the
> "No Child Left Behind." So Title Seven became Title Three and the funds
> became block granted. . . . So even though our population was not like
> Boston, we get a lot of money.

While there are a few refugees in Danbury, the majority of migrants were economic migrants and the city did not receive similar financial support that would enable municipal organizations to do more. The assistance that municipal organizations in Danbury did provide was focused primarily on the economic potential of migrants as they tried to help them find jobs and start their own businesses

Likely as a result of the limited assistance provided to immigrants by the government, religious organizations in Danbury provided more substantive

services. Much of this support stemmed from the city's history of Portuguese Catholic immigration, and specific congregations and faith-based group that served Portuguese immigrants and now assist contemporary Brazilian immigrants. As a representative of the Association of Religious Communities—which is an interfaith organization—reported, the services that they provided for Brazilian immigrants have historical roots in helping Portuguese as well as immigrants of other racial and ethnic origins thirty years ago. The Association of Religious Communities is experienced and prepared to respond to the needs of "Brazilians (who) started coming in the 80s," those of "the Hispanics (who) started coming in the 90s," and the problems experienced "most recently (by) Ecuadorians and Mexicans in the last 4 or 5 years," he explained. Furthermore, as these representatives of religious organizations in Danbury point out, the fact that both earlier Portuguese immigrants and more recent immigrants from Central and South America speak common languages facilitates the processes through which these religious organizations understand and satisfy their needs. Civic organizations also provided services in Danbury, but it was the religious organizations—at least according to those interviewed—that had a longer history and tradition of providing this assistance.

Portland does not have a long history of receiving immigrants of similar ethnic origin who share similar languages and religions in ways that link them through shared historical trajectories or organizations. Unlike earlier and later generations of immigrants in Danbury who are linked, at least minimally, through the Catholic Church, refugees to Portland were Buddhist in the 1980s and then Christian, Muslim and members of other religious organizations in the 1990s and 2000s. Not only do they not share a single religious tradition but many could not connect to or receive services from existing Buddhist or Muslim organizations in Portland because these organizations simply did not exist to channel resources and support. Civic organizations certainly existed, as in Danbury, and gradually shifted their service provision in response to immigrants' needs.

To be clear, not every organization that we explored—regardless of whether they were established before or after the influx of immigrants—can help new immigrants as much as they desire. Organizations required a constellation of human, economic, social, and cultural resources to assist immigrants; however, these resources were not always possible or sufficient. Some representatives we interviewed reported that even if they were aware of some services needed by recent immigrants, their organizations were not able to offer all the services needed by immigrants due to the lack of resources. A representative from the Training Resource Center in Portland, for example, expressed the frustration he experienced trying to find sufficient funding to start an ESL program and other programs he thought necessary for recent immigrants. While some organizations that we interviewed cannot provide assistance to immigrants, however, they are aware that immigrants

are potential clients—a factor that likely shapes their future agenda. That is to say, the vision of service organizations in this study were profoundly shaped by the influx of foreign-born populations, because these recent immigrants have brought to their attention the new issues, problems and agenda that they had to address. It is in this sense that immigrants both structurally and culturally shape the work performed by organizations in new destination cities.

CONCLUSIONS

Organizations in Portland, Maine and Danbury, Connecticut responded differently to the arrival of recent immigrants. While some existing and some new organizations in each city provided social services, it was municipal and civic organizations in Portland and civic and religious organizations in Danbury that provided most of the assistance to new arrivals. The fact that organizations provided assistance complements research by Helen Marrow (2011) which suggests that representatives of some organizations are keenly aware of and feel responsible for assisting recently arrived immigrants. As Marrow argues, it is probably because most of the organizations in this study are service- rather than regulatory-oriented that they tended to take a largely humanistic attitude towards newcomers. Even municipal organizations in this study (especially those in Portland)—which can be under pressure to enforce restrictive immigration policies and eligibility requirement—were open to helping recent immigrants settle.

The cases of Portland and Danbury suggest that the demographics of immigrants—in terms of whether they are refugees or economic migrants and whether they come with legal documents or without—as well as the history of immigration in particular locations shape which organizations are better prepared to respond to migrants and how they do so. Just as migrants influence labor, residential, and educational markets, this article shows how they have similar impacts on municipal, civic and religious organizations. As population ecologists pointed out years ago, when the ecology of an area changes so do its organizations—as influenced by the history of the area and the changes taking place. As they changed and adapted, organizations in Portland and Danbury acted as "main characters" in the urban drama in McQuarrie and Marwell's words. Municipal and civic organizations were the stars of the drama in Portland and civic and religious organizations the stars in Danbury.

Federal policies about different types of immigrants also play an important role in explaining why organizations in Portland are better able to assist recent arrivals than those in Danbury. In fact, the U.S. government takes on many responsibilities for refugees whom they accept. As Hana Brown (2011) explained, if refugees are accepted, the U.S. government "arranges

their plan transportation to the United States. Upon arrival, they have pre-arranged housing, immediate access to an array of social programs denied to other immigrants, and other assistance from federally funded resettlement agencies" (p. 145). These federally sponsored services include not merely "health and welfare benefits, but also English classes, vocational and professional training, financial assistance for higher education, and relaxed citizenship requirements" (Horton, 2004, p. 474). In other words, the federal government recognizes and actively satisfies the needs of refugees by providing more resources, such as funding opportunities, for organizations in Portland than those in Danbury.

Moreover, refugee as a legal and social status may provide more cultural incentives for organizations in Portland to assist recent arrivals than those in Danbury. Research has shown that service and health organizations are more committed to assisting refugees than immigrants perceived as economic immigrants, especially those who might enter the United States without appropriate documentation (Brown, 2011; Horton, 2004). Similarly, in comparison with refugees in Portland who are in the United States legally, undocumented migrants in Danbury make several representatives of organizations ambivalent about the type and extent of services they should offer to newcomers. It is in this sense that "refugee" is both a legal status that creates different structures and a cultural label that orients the actions of organizations in different new geographic locations to address the issues that stem from immigration in distinct ways.

While the specific patterns evident in Portland and Danbury may not be evident in other places with new populations of immigrants, they point to the importance of asking questions at the local level about organizations. Due to the limited number of empirical studies of organizations and organizational fields in other new destinations, we cannot compare or predict how the organizational responses to recent immigrants vary from one geographical site to another. This study suggests that intersections between the characteristics of different migrant populations and the size of the city and degree of organizational specialization are key to understanding how organizations change and work together around immigration. Our findings suggest that places with large numbers of refugees will see more organizational response at the municipal level and places with long histories of religious or civic social service efforts will see activities among religious or civic organizations as influenced both by the characteristics of the migrants and the histories of the places.

NOTE

1. We decided prior to conducting this research that it would be difficult to impossible to change the names of Portland and Danbury or to disguise their locations since an important part of the story

we tell focuses on place and the importance of place in how cities respond to recent immigrants. We considered changing the names of the organizations we focused on, but also decided against that because these cities are small and it would likely not be difficult to identify the organizations. We changed the names of the respondents and we did not include information about people's backgrounds, genders, or other identifying factors. Almost all of these organizations included one or more staff members and, particularly given the time since this data was gathered, many staff have since left or changed positions. We explained our approach to the respondents prior to their interviews, and they all spoke with us knowing that the cities and organizations would be named while they themselves would not be.

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