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Narrating Migrants and Cowboys:

Language and Race in Southwest Kansas Local Governments

A thesis submitted in partial satisfaction

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in Anthropology

by

Addison R Dickens

2019

ABSTRACT OF THESIS

Narrating Migrants and Cowboys:

Language and Race in Southwest Kansas Local Governments

by

Addison R Dickens

Master of Arts in Linguistic Anthropology

University of California, Los Angeles, 2019

Professor Erin Katherine Debenport, Chair

This thesis is a linguistic analysis of identity as it emerges in narratives told by local government leaders in southwest Kansas. Some communities in southwest Kansas have shifted from a majority-Anglo population to a majority-Latinx population in the last thirty years, and yet, a majority of local government leaders and business owners here are Anglo community members. This thesis specifically investigates the ways in which City Commissioners, City Managers, and city staff in two cities maintain Anglo hegemonic power through narratives about race, migration, multiculturalism and identity in the communities. Narratives about migrant identity and cowboy identity are analyzed using the frameworks of racialization and the processes of distinction, illegitimation and authorization (Bucholtz and Hall 2004).

The thesis of Addison Rae Dickens is approved.

Hesham Sam Alim

Paul V. Kroskrity

Erin Katherine Debenport, Committee Chair

University of California, Los Angeles

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Introduction

In the winter of 2016, George[1], a Filipino migrant to Garden City who serves as the chaplain at Tyson Fresh Meats,[2] rushed to the home of a Tyson employee. For the employee and his family, this was their first winter in Kansas, having moved from Myanmar some months before. With low temperatures in the range of 15-20°F, George recalls, "They were freezing because it was winter! I rushed and brought them a bunch of heaters to plug in only to realize that they have a thermostat, but they didn't know how to use it." Luckily, this was a house that had a working thermostat; however, **in** Garden City, there is an average of 300 occupied housing units per month that lack basic utilities because tenants cannot afford them (Stull 2011).

Still others are unable to find a place to rent because of a housing shortage, and rents are steep (Shukert and Haase 2017). However, Michelle and her family struggled to find housing for a different reason. When they first moved from Minnesota, the home they rented in Garden City was uninhabitable. It was covered in bugs. It was filthy. When she and her husband arrived with their four children, they couldn't bear to sit one minute inside the house. However, when they began searching for a house to buy, she says, "Looking for a place in person, with thick accent and really unusual looks, it wasn't easy getting a place." She concluded, "They wouldn't rent to us because we were Black. Even when we showed our income, it wasn't about financial capability. … Those were the first things that make your hair stand up."

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[1] All names used in this thesis are pseudonyms, unless otherwise stated.

[2] Tyson Fresh Meats Incorporated is a large-scale beef processing plant located just outside of Garden City, Kansas. Cargill and National Beef are two other processing plants located in Dodge City, Kansas.

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In southwest Kansas, specifically Garden City and Dodge City, I heard many stories like these. And despite this, there are other stories yet, about the dazzling successes of two communities benefitting from economic and population growth. Taking each perspective into account, I ground my arguments in the people of southwest Kansas and the stories they tell me, themselves, and others because these stories reveal disparities in knowledge, resources, and political power. They are stories about understandings—often misunderstandings or re-understandings—of migration and life in a new and old community.

Garden City and Dodge City are stories in themselves. Drastically different from any surrounding towns in the western half of the state of Kansas, these two places have exponentially grown in population, and gone from a majority-Anglo population to a majority-minority population within the last thirty years. This is due to the establishment of meatpacking plants in both cities that largely recruit migrant workers. However, even as the demographics of Garden City and Dodge City continue to rapidly change, most of the business owners and local government leaders continue to be Anglo community members. In an effort to address minority representation in positions of local power, this thesis investigates how various community members—local government leaders, migrants, and others—discuss these changes in regards to migration, race, multiculturalism, and identity.

The multiplicity of discourses surrounding these topics often contradict each other. Elected and appointed officials, including city commissioners, mayors, and city managers share narratives about thriving communities with economic and population growth. They tell narratives about a community whose faults lie solely in the claim that it is perhaps not growing fast enough.

The narrative disjuncture between stories told by local government leaders and those that begin this paper, for example, points to two different articulations of value—one that valorizes labor itself, and another that valorizes the people who perform that labor. The disjuncture arises because one string of narratives reifies a concept of community growth, while the others center the individuals and families who make that growth possible. A materialist analysis posits that growth becomes fetishized as something that can be modified and controlled by local government leaders irrespective of the laborers who constitute and are constituted by that growth (Marx 1977). However, the focus of this paper is not this fetish in itself, but rather how capitalists, influenced by ideological assumptions about race, multiculturalism and migration, racialize laborers in speech genres across the community.

The speech genres examined in this paper include public City Commission meetings and semi-structured interviews with local government leaders. To speak to "genres," Bakhtin (1979) differentiated between types of speech in literary works using the concept, and it was later characterized by linguistic anthropologists Charles Briggs and Richard Bauman (1992) to differentiate between types of speech in everyday conversations. Recognizing that generic frameworks are inherently interpretive (Briggs and Bauman 1992), I employ "genre" only superficially to characterize the differences in registers, audiences, and referents between semi-structured interviews and City Commission meetings.

I chose to examine local government because Kansan localities historically have more jurisdictional responsibilities than their state government (Flentje and Aistrup 2010). However, despite the fact that local governments in Kansas exercise a considerable amount of control over a city's economic and social conditions, there has been little research into just what kind of influ-

ence local elected officials enjoy. Finally, narratives from individual interviews and public City Commission meetings are also interesting sites through which to analyze how a community tells itself and outsiders who they are. Both Dodge City and Garden City are experienced in promoting their identity to outsiders. Garden City acts as a regional shopping hub for southwestern Kansas and eastern Colorado, boasting that its trade area includes 190,000 people ("Our Community," 2019). In fact, this is a point of contention of mostly friendly competition between Garden City and Dodge City. While Dodge City does not attract people for shopping, it does have an international reputation as a "wild west" tourist destination.

Methods

I first listened and transcribed voices from southwest Kansas before I visited, or even met anyone from there. As an undergraduate student at Kansas State University and under the direction of sociolinguist Dr. Mary Kohn, I transcribed interviews as part of a sociolinguistic study on language change in Kansas, which brought me into contact with speakers from this part of the state. Later, it was by chance that I got invited on a road trip to Taos, New Mexico with about twenty other students from Garden City. After making new friends on the trip, I finally visited Garden City, and subsequently Dodge City, for a week to collect interviews for an undergraduate thesis. I did not return to southwest Kansas until two years later to conduct ethnographic research for this project.

The conclusions presented in this paper stem from two months of ethnographic research that took place in July and August of 2018. During this time, I attended seven City Commission meetings in Dodge City and Garden City. Beyond participant observation, I conducted thirty semi-structured interviews with mayors, City Commissioners, city staff, members of the Cultural Relations Advisory Boards, members of the Ethnic Empowerment Network, (a group whose aim is to support migrants in the area; see Community Background), members working in the Unified School District, and other community members.

Because of my limited time in the field, I attended as many events as possible, squeezing in interviews at coffee shops, City Hall, professional offices, and even while riding along with a commissioner to deliver lunch to her children in the middle of the day. I volunteered for the High Plains Public Radio station, and spent some afternoons there discussing local events. I was invited to the rodeo, fairs, an Eid al-Adha service at a local mosque, and to play in a local band that

performed in nursing homes. Because I divided my time between city government officials, Tyson Fresh Meats and Cargill Meat Solutions employees, school district employees and regional historians, I am able to piece together a holistic understanding of identities and their multifaceted associations. This multifaceted knowledge informs my understanding of the indexical associations constructed in the narratives of local government leaders and others when they discuss their towns. Like all knowledge, however, mine is only partial, especially because I am gathering from such a large pool of perspectives.

Studying Up

Ultimately, I spent most of my time and energy attending City Commission meetings and interviewing Commissioners and city staff. I chose to study people in positions of power, because as recent work in "studying up" in anthropology shows (Ho 2009, Murphy 2015, Souleles 2018), ethnographic research among elites, including government officials, is crucial to understand how power is accumulated and distributed in society (Nader 1972). Like Karen Ho's (2009) ethnography of Wall Street, I had to make careful considerations into which departments I would study. Ho (2009) finally chose corporate-finance-related departments because of their role in shaping the corporation's face, and how it appeals to shareholders. Similarly, I chose to study commissioners as the "face" of city government. While City Managers and staff have a much larger role in designing and implementing policy, Commissioners are those who are most involved in sharing policy ideas and city values with the public. For most Garden City and Dodge City citizens, the commissioners are the faces from local government they recognize, if they recognize any at all.

The methods I employ are similar to other anthropologists who engage in studying elite individuals and institutions that are difficult to gain access to. Like Ho (2009), I do not study local government as emanating from one bounded location or group of people. I follow Ho (2009) and her conjuring of Hugh Gusterson (1997) to rely more on formal interviews and official documents than participant observation. Unlike Ho (2009), however, I did not have or need elite institutional connections because I was interested in working with public figures in smaller cities, and therefore more easily accessible than Wall Street investment bankers. In this sense, my "studying up" looks more like the groundwork laid by anthropologist, Keith Murphy (2015), who studies lesser known Swedish designers who own small businesses. Similarly, I am not studying recognizable state or federal politicians; rather, I am providing insights into local elected officials and city staff who do have a considerable amount of influence within their community spheres, but little influence beyond that.

Other practical, methodological tools I employed stem from key insights from anthropologist, David Souleles, who studies private equity investors. Souleles (2018) argues that, while relentless attempts to make contacts with consultants is not an ethical methodology for anthropologists who do not study elite populations, this method is absolutely crucial to collecting ethnographic data among the elite. Following Souleles' methodological layout for studying elites, I forged connections with people involved in multiple aspects of local government and double (or triple) e-mailed Commissioners who did not answer my initial attempts at contact. Overall, I interviewed five Commissioners, while four Commissioners declined or did not respond to the requests.

Positionality

From the onset of my time in southwest Kansas, I presented myself as a researcher, showing to City Commission meetings to introduce myself and my project. I think this approach may explain why some Commissioners refused to meet with me, but I also know that by positioning myself in this way, I was able to leverage interviews with busy people in positions of power. Further, my positionality as a white woman and native Kansan allowed me access to racialized narratives, spaces, and topics that Anglo Commissioners may feel comfortable sharing between each other, but perhaps would not be as open to sharing these ideas with non-white or outsider researchers.

At the same time, however, because I am from the eastern part of the state, I felt that stereotypes of easterners as "liberals" or "Democrats" influenced some interviewees to share ideas about what they thought I would *like* to hear. I should mention now that between eastern and western Kansans, there are sometimes little ripples of resentfulness. Like any other type of rivalry, this one can manifest anywhere on a fluid continuum from playful to hostile. Eastern Kansas often represents wealthy urban and suburban centers, while western Kansas is known for its rural and agricultural activities. To characterize this point, I present Thomas Frank's (2004) caricature of easterners and westerners in *What's The Matter With Kansas?,* a journalistic perspective that describes the political culture of Kansas in the late 20th and early 21st centuries. Frank describes the eastern half of the state as "'creative,' white-collar types [who] develop business strategies over lattes," while western Kansans were described as "farmers [who] struggle to make a living…" (Frank 2004, 36). Even though these descriptions are exaggerated generalizations, they illuminate the type of divide that some Kansans may perceive. As such, my posi-

tionality as an eastern Kansan (and also a researcher from UCLA) may have led some intervie-

wees to make assumptions about what I wanted to hear, and adjust their position accordingly.

Specifically, I interpret narratives of "colorblindness" in this way. However, these narratives are

still important pieces of ethnographic data that reveal pressures interviewees felt to speak about

race and migration in a certain way.

Narrative Framework

Using the framework of narrative analysis (Ochs and Capps 2001), I examine how race,

identity, multiculturalism and migration are framed across speech genres in southwest Kansas. A

narrative framework is useful here, in that it reveals how speakers make sense of themselves and

the world around them (Ochs and Capps 1995 and 2001). In a linguistic sense, William Labov

and Joshua Waletzsky (1967) defined narratives as temporally separated blocks of speech that

relate an event, where the narrator often makes evaluations of what is described. They laid the

ground work for analyzing linguistic aspects of narratives that reveal information about view-

point and credibility (1967). Ochs and Capps (1995) build on this structure to describe that,

> [I]t is not simply that grammatical structures and lexicons of a language carve up the
> world in different ways, but also that we as speakers of these languages routinely draw
> upon particular structures and words to construct an idea or point of view (Ochs and
> Capps 1995, 54).

A narrative analysis of the narratives told by local government leaders and other commu-

nity members in Garden City and Dodge City examines narrative strategies, specifically at the

lexical level, that index racialized and often racist ideologies. The ability of narratives to index

other structures of meaning beyond the narrative itself is what psychologist Jerome Bruner (re-

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calling speech act theorist J.L. Austin (1962) and John Searle (1969)) calls the "illocutionary force" of narrative (2002, 90). Bruner (2002) was interested in legal narratives, namely how they make the strange—an experience, a concept, a crime—familiar and relatable to the interlocutor. However, this idea is applicable outside of the courtroom. For example, understanding the narrative strategies that local government leaders in southwest Kansas employ to make sense of the events happening in their community sheds light on how they conceptualize race, identity, multiculturalism and migration.

Community Background

I understand the history of the region through my own experiences, but also through the work of historians and anthropologists who either directly address southwest Kansas as a region, or who broadly theorize colonialism, capitalism and racism in the United States. I start with Pekka Hämäläinen's (2008) analysis of Indigenous history on the Great Plains, Patrick Wolfe's (2006) theory of colonialism as an on-going structure, and James N. Leiker's (2002) analysis of "Race Relations in the Sunflower State." Lisa Lowe's (2015) and Jemima Pierre's (2012) analysis of local practices as the result of global interdependencies also inform this thesis. More recent scholars are cited to frame the meatpacking industry in the region (Stull and Broadway 2008; Broadway 1990; Blanchette 2018; Fink 2000), migration trends (Broadway 1990; Kandel and Parrado 2004) and economic changes in rural Kansas (Broadway 1990).

Southwest Kansas, at a glance, is more sky that anything else. I found in my photographs that I often captured an unequal ratio of sky to land, considerably favoring the former. It seems fitting then, that the sky—and its interactions with the land—help create the social world of this region. For example, rain, and how much and what kind, can determine agricultural successes and failures; it's the difference between a good year and a devastating one. For a rancher, it's the difference between cheap grain and exorbitant prices.

Another example: sunlight. In the recent past, people used the sun to determine the racial make-up of their town. "Sundown" laws were enforced across counties, and in more than a few conversations, it was whispered to me that these laws, though no longer enforced, were never actually removed from some city ordinances. James Loewen's work shows that "sundown" towns across the Midwest were prevalent up until the 1960s, but even when "sundown" ordi-

nances were eliminated or ignored, they continued to be informally enforced (2005). Loewen reveals how all-white communities in the Midwest continue to be all-white "on purpose," as racist prejudices persist and Black families are pressured to leave, either through violence or intimidation (Loewen 2005).

In Garden City and Dodge City, towns where a majority of the population is Latinx, it is possible to see the remnants of sundown towns and segregation. For example, in Garden City, there is a sharp divide on either side of 3rd Street between a neighborhood where over 90% of the population is white, Non-Hispanic and another neighborhood where over than 70% of the population identifies as Hispanic. In Dodge City, the divide is even more stark between neighborhoods that are north and south of Comanche Street. One woman from Garden City told me that when she started a campaign to abolish any remaining sundown laws from city ordinances, she was advised by a City Commissioner to squash the campaign. According to this woman, the Commissioner cited the idea that if people are made aware that the ordinances still exist, some sheriffs might try to enforce them.

If sundown laws seem strange in one of the states that led the slavery abolitionist movement, then historian James N. Leiker explains away this contradiction. According to Leiker (2002) and other Kansan historians, the abolitionists in Kansas were more concerned with working class whites than moral arguments against slavery. To prove this point, Leiker explains that when emancipated Blacks began settling in Kansas after the Civil War, legislators did not allow them to vote, and there was an increase in anti-Black racism (2002, 222). Today, only 6.2 percent of the entire population of Kansas identifies of Black (U.S. Census 2012).

Furthermore, the same white settlers who fought for an abolitionist state during the Civil War also participated in the genocide of Indigenous peoples before and after the war (Hämäilä- nen 2008). This goes to show that the state does not share a unified political history. Factions of state activists often were at odds with one another.

Before 1800, southwest Kansas was a part of Comanchería, a nation who traded with Spanish colonizers to the south and United States colonizers to the north (Hämäilänen 2008). During the enforcement of the United States' 1830 Indian Removal Act, the Osage, Cheyenne, Kiowa and Naishan tribes were forced onto reservations in the Comanchería, causing violent wars between tribes and settlers over resources (Hämäilänen 2008). After the Mexican-American War, the United States Army established settlements in northern Texas with the purpose of orga- nizing white immigration and murdering Indigenous people who lived there (Hämäilänen 2008). This forced the Comanche people and other tribes northward into southwest Kansas. As historian Pekka Hämäilänen said, "When the Civil War ended, the Great Plains emerged as the most vio- lent place in North America" (2008, 321). This is because the U.S. began a systematic campaign to murder Indigenous peoples in order to build the Union Pacific and Kansas Pacific railroads, and to make space for cattle trails. Then, after Ulysses Grant took control of the United States, he enforced strict assimilation practices when violence was not enough (Hämäilänen 2008).

Today, 0.4 percent of the population in both Garden City and Dodge City identify as Na- tive American (U.S. Census Bureau 2010a, 2010b), pointing to the on-going structure of settler colonialism (Wolfe 2006). The erasure of genocide and relocation of Indigenous people in the narratives about the region's history coupled with a naturalized history of white heritage perpetu- ates Wolfe's "logic of elimination" that maintains "invasion as a structure, not an event" (388).

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In analyzing two towns whose subsistence depends on the agricultural industry, it is impossible to ignore the implications of the permanence of this industry, and success it could only afford at the price of elimination of Indigenous way of life (Wolfe 2006).

Overall, the southwest corner of Kansas remains a fortress of conflict between the descendants of Spanish conquistadors, Anglo settlers, and Indigenous peoples. Even so, it is a place that is often homogenized as white (Cattelino 2010; Leiker 2002). Defying tropes that link whiteness and tolerance, Leiker's "myth of tolerance" (Leiker 2002), or the idea that people are tolerant in public, but racist in private, is upheld in literature like Langston Hughes' *The Ways of White Folks* (1934). Hughes (1934) relays stories about the midwest that reveal it to be a place structured by violence, imperialism, racism and an on-going reckoning with these structuring events and their accompanying discourses.

In more recent history, the overall populations of the two towns in southwest Kansas where I conducted ethnographic research are growing at unprecedented rates. In the last thirty years, the populations of Garden City and Dodge City have increased by 53 percent and 46 percent, respectively (see figure A). This increase is attributed to the establishment of meatpacking plants, and both cities saw a boost in their economies as well as more state and corporate investment (Finney County Economic Development Corporation, 2018).

Furthermore, compared to surrounding towns, the increase in population and corporate investment is an anomaly (Stull and Broadway 2008). In fact, while both Dodge City and Garden City were growing at an unprecedented rate, the rural population of Kansas as a whole saw a 6.5 percent decrease from 1980 to 2010 (US Dept. of Commerce 1981 and 2012), largely due to rural to urban migration caused by the commodification of agriculture (Brown 2018). Because rural

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to urban migration was not depleting the population in Garden City nor Dodge City, the increase in population often is interpreted as something that "saved" both cities, especially in comparison to surrounding areas (Brown 2018).

At the same time, however, growing economies and population do not correlate with a decrease in racial and income inequality. In fact, on a general level, corporations often damage labor relations and income equality in the locations where they establish themselves (Young and Newton 1980). Examining the impact that large corporations make on rural America, economists John Young and Jan Newton found that corporations damage the workforce, natural environment and social relations in the rural community where they are established (1980). Using other ethnographic evidence, it is clear that the meatpacking industries in southwest Kansas mirror the same kind of disruptions caused by corporations in rural communities that are cited by Young and Newton (1980). For example, an explanation of why meatpacking plants moved from urban to rural locations, as well as labor recruitment strategies expose organized plans that value profit over community interests

While technological advancements and structural changes in the industry led to a relocation of plants from urban to rural areas, it also led to a restructuring and deregulation of the meatpacking workforce (Broadway 1990). Today, rural meatpacking plants mostly hire migrant workers (Schwartzman 2013). In Garden City, the first beef packing plant, IBP, arrived in early 1980, and initially recruited Vietnamese refugees as employees (Broadway 1990). In 2001, when the plant Tyson Fresh Meats Inc bought IBP, they began recruiting other migrant workers including those from Mexico, Central America and East Africa (Stull 2017). Because of this, the Latino population in Garden City went from 25 percent in 1990 to 49 percent in 2010 (U.S. Census Bu-

reau 2010b and US Dept. of Commerce 1990) (See Figure 1). In Dodge City, the shift was more

dramatic: 18 percent to 59 percent in the same amount of time (US Census 2010a and US Dept.

of Commerce 1990) (See Figure 2). Community members from Mexico, Guatemala and El Sal-

vador are responsible for most of the growth in 2010 (U.S. Census Bureau 2010b). The US Cen-

sus categories of "African American and Black," "Vietnamese" and "Other Asian" also increased

in population[3].

In the meatpacking plants, employees who work on the production line at the plant make

an average of $11-12 per hour, and these jobs include cutters, trimmers, machine operators, and

production line workers[4] (Stull 2017). Sociologist Kathleen Schwartzman (2013) states that mar-

ginalized Americans with citizenship and un/documented migrants are recruited into this industry

because English skills are not necessarily required, and immigrant labor keeps production costs

low as workers are less likely to unionize. George Lipsitz further argues that some employers are

actively involved in maintaining the undocumented status of their employees in order to avoid

ethical and legal requirements (1998, 49). Finally, the dramatic increase in population caused by

the relocation of meatpacking plants to Dodge City and Garden City indirectly caused a housing

crisis in both communities.

Overall, understanding the social history and contemporary economic situation of both

Garden City and Dodge City is crucial to understanding the kinds of narratives that emerge from

local government leaders. This allows for a situating of the narratives in a particular time and

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[3] Anthropologist Donald Stull offers a more nuanced estimate of specific populations, estimating the Burmese popu-
lation in Garden City to be between 150 and 700 people, and the Somalian and Ethiopian population to be about 400
people (2011).

[4] See (Fink 2000) for ethnographic details about working conditions inside a meatpacking plant.

place. Indeed, both the narratives and the history is crucial to this linguistic analysis. Only examining the narratives of local government leaders paints a picture of a booming economy in prosperous communities, while only examining the social and economic history would depict oppression without explaining how it is actively maintained.

<u>Literature Review</u>

The overarching theoretical framework of this paper concerns the emergence, construction and reproduction of identity through language. Returning to my original research question asking how various community members discuss changes in their community with regard to migration, race, multiculturalism, and identity, I focus on identity work that can be teased out of community texts. Linguists and anthropologists Mary Bucholtz and Kira Hall define identity as the "social positioning of the self and other" that is emergent in interaction (2004, 586). In the narratives of local government officials, identities emerge on the axis of who can participate in local government. At City Commission meetings, cowboy identity emerges in the face of economic and social change. Both are examples of social positionings, whose moments depend on larger structures inside and beyond the community.

Each of these social positionings are also already racial positionings. Bucholtz and Hall reveal how macro-level ideological categories with deep histories, like the social construction of race, inform how identity is constructed in micro-level interactions (2004). As such, it is crucial to understand of the role language plays in each of the categories contained in my research question: identity, race, multiculturalism, migration. The following literature review addresses each category and how it interacts with language.

Language and Identity

Identity is constructed at both the level of Discourse and the level of individual interactions. Bucholtz and Hall draw identity as emergent in interaction, dependent but not determined by macro categories, reliant on indexical relationships, relational, and partial (2004). In illuminating how identity is relational, Bucholtz and Hall propose a few ways in which identities are

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constructed through interaction. For the purposes of analyzing identity in the narratives of local government leaders, I will focus on the processes of "distinction," "illegitimation," and "authorization" (Bucholtz and Hall 2004). These processes are important for understanding how local government leaders make identities distinct from one another, and how power is attributed to different identities.

In their chapter on linguistic differentiation in *Regimes of Language*, Irvine and Gal (2000) describe differentiation at the group level, but Bucholtz and Hall (2004) show how these processes (what they call "distinction") play out in face-to-face identity work as well. Processes of distinction are linguistic practices that highlight social difference and ignore similarities (Bucholtz and Hall 2004, 600). In the narratives of local government leaders, process of distinction are at play when local government leaders focus on the differences between Latinx community members and Anglo community members. For local government leaders, these differences justify the lack of Latinx participation in local government.

The processes of illegitimation illuminate how "identities are dismissed, censored or simply ignored" through hegemonic ideologies and institutional power (Bucholtz and Hall 2004, 603). The process of illegitimation is at work in the narratives of local government leaders when all non-Anglo community members are assumed to be migrants to the area. For example, in Garden City, the language of local government leaders draws boundaries around racial categories and assigns a distrust in government to Latinx community members. Local government leaders dismiss Latinx identity in local government by citing a shared distrust in government by this group. At the same time, the Latinx identity of those who do serve in city staff position are erased.

Language and Race

Building on the process of distinction in the narratives of local government leaders, understanding racialization as a linguistic process of distinction reveals how local government leaders assume the ways in which they racialize members in their community are "natural." Racialization, or racial formation, is the process through which racial categories are understood as 'real' definitions of human difference, combined with the process through which these categories are assigned social meaning (Alim et. al. 2016; Chun and Lo 2015; Omi and Winant 1994; Silverstein 2005). Broadly, racialization is grounded in historical oppression (Omi and Winant 1994) and reinforces white hegemonic superiority (Wortham 2011). Indeed, racial formation is a historical process, where race is neither embedded nor excluded from other social distinctions, including economic class (Magubane 1996; Omi and Winant 1994). Therefore, an analysis of contemporary racial formation must take into consideration the "residues" of slavery and settler colonialism (Lowe 2015; Wolfe 2006).

Racialization operates on the level of institutions (Irvine and Gal 2000), but also emerges in everyday interactions (Omi and Winant 1994). Irvine and Gal (2000) reveal how distinctions, racial differences among them, are made real on the group level. Using the framework of Irvine and Gal (2000), linguistic anthropologist H. Samy Alim shows how racialization is achieved through language on the individual level (Alim 2016). Similarly, linguist Elaine Chun and anthropologist Adrienne Lo reveal the myriad ways in which racialization is reproduced through language, saying, "Racialization is a semiotic process that naturalizes social difference" (Chun and Lo 2015, 220). To investigate racialization, then, is to study the way in which racial categories and ideas about those categories are reproduced through language.

Racialization is realized through ideologies that are often regarded as natural (Chun and Lo 2015; Omi and Winant 1994; Silverstein 2005; Wortham et. al. 2011). Broadly, linguistic anthropologists Judith Irvine and Susan Gal interpret ideologies as "conceptual schemas" that create identity and are shaped by larger social, economic and political structures (2000, 35). Both Gal and Irvine interpret these schemas to be beyond the awareness of individual speakers (2000). Indeed, other scholars agree that dominant groups control what seems natural, or common sense about race (Hill 2008, 19; Omi and Winant 1994, 11), where dominant forms of racialization become engrained and unquestioned.

As described earlier, a narrative analysis is a fundamental way to tie together both language and race, and language and identity. Similar to linguistic anthropologist, Stanton Wortham's (2011), research on recurring narratives about muggings among different speakers, this paper focusses on a similar narrative about race and identity told by different speakers. The advantage of focussing on one, recurring narrative across speakers is that it produces a single, localized "model of identity" that that can be indexically linked to macro-level categories (Wortham, 2011).In southwest Kansas, local government leaders told strikingly similar stories about why Latinx and other minority community members do not (or cannot) participate in local government decision making by reproducing the stereotype that Latinx community members have a "natural" distrust in government because of their race.

Indexicality

Theories of indexicality explain how race and identity are reproduced and contested through the language of local government leaders and other community members. Indexicality was adapted by linguistic anthropologists to explain the pragmatic meaning of utterances. Semi-

otic anthropologist, Richard Parmentier (1994), re-envisioned the philosophical work on signs and knowledge by Charles Sanders Peirce (1932) to explain how meaning is reproduced or contested across space and time. Parmentier adopts the Peircean model of meaning, where context and social histories are needed to interpret the relationship between a sign and what it signifies (1994). One of the signs that Peirce described as part of his 'second trichotomy' of signs includes indexes, which point toward these relationships and rely on contextual information in order to be recognized as a sign (1994).

Identity work and racialization in the narratives of community members in southwest Kansas rely on first-order indexicality, an idea that linguistic anthropologist Michael Silverstein (2003) grafted onto Peirce's concept of indexes. First-order indexicality is the relationship between a sign and the object it points to, and second-order indexicality explains how a micro-level sign, like a linguistic feature or lexical item, can index a macro-level idea (Silverstein 2003). Other linguistic anthropologists use first and second-order indexicality to explain the ways in which racialized discourses reproduce racist stereotypes. This includes the work of Jane Hill (2008) on Mock Spanish, as well as the work of Otto Santa Ana (1999) on animal metaphors that are used to describe Latinx migrants by both reporters and those interviewed by reporters in the Los Angeles Times. This is similar to my work in that first and second-order indexicality are used to understand how the racialized discourses of local government leaders point to racist stereotypes that are used to justify the lack of representation of Latinx community members in local government.

Migration in the Midwest

Anthropology in the rural midwest began in the 1920s and mostly focused on understanding rural poverty among migrants and African Americans, which checks out because anthropologists during this time were largely funded by the U.S. Department of Agricultural (Adams 2007). Anthropologists lost interest in the midwest during and after WWII, as anthropologists turned toward the "other" outside of U.S. borders (Adams 2007; Cattelino 2010). The 1980 Farm Crisis again made anthropologists interested in the rural US (Adams 2007), and recent work of anthropologists and sociologists of this region focus on topics such as whiteness (Adams 2002; Hartigan 2005; Lipsitz 1998; Stewart 1996), migration and demographic changes (Cárdenas 2004; Ortiz 2002; Ramírez-Ferrero 2005; Salamon 2003; Schwartzman 2013; Silver 2018; Stull and Broadway 2008), and industry changes, specifically concerning rural, meatpacking plants (Blanchette 2018; Broadway 1990; Drodge 2004; Fink 1998; Stull and Broadway 2008; 2012; Stull 2011). While migration studies in the midwest focus on the migrants themselves, this paper focusses on the power that local institutions exert over the migrant experience.

Finally, theorizing migration and local government in the midwest should begin with the framework proposed by anthropologists Akhil Gupta and James Ferguson, who state that instead of looking at how communities are affected or changed by capitalism and colonialism, anthropologists should examine why and how communities are formed in certain spaces because of colonialism and capitalism (1992). Gupta and Ferguson argue that ethnographers must go beyond a textual analysis of a situation, offering that one solution may be to examine immigration and immigration policies (1992, 17). Other anthropologists who argue for a study of community creation instead of community change include Stephen Gregory, cited by Jessica Cattelino in her annual review of *Anthropology in the US*, describes communities as "power-laden field of social

relations whose meanings, structures, and frontiers are continually produced, contested, and re-worked in relation to a complex range of sociopolitical attachments and antagonisms" (2010, 11). This research addresses the changing meanings and structures incited by migrants to both Dodge City and Garden City. And, taking new sociopolitical attachments into account, this paper addresses how local government leaders discuss change in their ever-changing community.

Explanation of Terms

This paper employs a variety of terms to describe multifaceted identities. In interviews, a majority of community members use the term "Hispanic" to refer to people with a background from Mexico, Guatemala or El Salvador, and it is used irrespective to citizenship. Additionally, many community members with a background from Mexico identify as "Hispanic." On the US Census forms, "Hispanic" is categorized as an ethnicity that seems to be subsumed by other racial categories including "White," "Black," and "Native American." Respondents to the census who identify as "Hispanic" must then choose between "White," "Black," or "Native American." In describing the origin of the term "Hispanic" in the United States, Nicholas De Genova and Ana Ramos-Zayas (2008) describe it as a term used during the Nixon administration to erase the differences between a strong Chicano movement and Puerto Rican movement. Using Spanish as a weak commonality, "Hispanic" was employed in efforts to dismantle progress in civil rights that each of the groups were attempting to achieve (De Genova and Ramos-Zayas 2008).

Instead of "Hispanic," De Genova and Ramos-Zayas (2008) use "Latino" as a descriptor because it can be a unifying identity, that is not based on language, but rather on a shared history of colonization in Latin America, and this paper aggregates the gender-inclusive "x." At the same

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time that "Latinx" can unite, it can also be used to marginalize working class groups by erasing

the differences in relationships that each Latinx group has with the state (De Genova and Ramos-

Zayas 2008). And furthermore, even those with citizenship who identify as Latinx or Hispanic

never fully enjoy the same benefits as white, non-Hispanic citizens (De Genova and Ramos-Za-

yas 2008). With this in mind, this paper employs the terms that community members use to de-

scribe themselves. At the same time, I will acknowledge the differences in interests and histories

of the many group identities in Garden City and Dodge City. When it is relevant to group inter-

ests, nationality is used to describe the different issues that migrants and descendants of migrants

face. However, hyphenated terms to describe "Americans" are never employed because this kind

of classification reifies classes of Americans, and reinforces Anglo-American as an unmarked

category (Reyes 2006). Finally, "Anglo" is used to described white community members in Gar-

den City and Dodge City who do not identify as Hispanic nor Latinx, and who have a back-

grounds from Europe.

In terms of citizenship, I follow the example of anthropologist Nicholas De Genova, who,

in his theoretical work on migration and "illegality," rejects the terms "illegal" and

"immigrant" (2002). De Genova recognizes that "illegal" people is a category created by the

state, and criticizes the state and its arbitrary tenets of "illegality," calling for other scholars who

study undocumented migration to do the same (2002). De Genova argues that undocumented

migration is intrinsically labor migration, and the current state of migration to the US can only

occur because there are labor opportunities to be filled in the US, and because of their

"illegality," migrants are exploited by those providing labor opportunities (2002). I add that in

addition to this, other state policies and trade agreements such as NAFTA also created the condi-

tions for modern migration, especially from Mexico (Hamilton 1982; Hinojosa-Ojeda and McCleery 2002).

In addition, the term "illegal" also indexes discourses of criminality. It is this kind of discourse that allows for the US Border Patrol to transfer from the Department of Labor to the Department of Homeland Security (De Genova 2002). Because of these reasons, "un/documented" will be used to refer to an individual's or group's relation to the state in terms of their formal citizenship and recognition. In this paper, this type of categorization only becomes relevant when discussing working relations and conditions in the meat packing plants in Garden City and Dodge City.

During fieldwork, the term I used in interviews and when speaking with consultants was, "immigrant." However, as I continued my research, especially with regard to larger dynamics that occur outside of southwest Kansas, I reexamined the ideas I was reinforcing my using such a term. In the end, I reject this term because as anthropologist, Nicholas De Genova states, it is a term created and reinforced by the state (De Genova 2002). "Immigrant" serves to reproduce ideas about the state being a bounded space that takes "in" migrants, presumably permanently, and in a paternalistic way (De Genova 2002). De Genova argues for the use of "migrant" instead of "immigrant" because it destabilizes the idea of permanent settlement, challenges the American Dream narrative, and does not reinforce the idea of national borders (2002).

Other terms that are used in specific ways include local government titles and the idea of "community." The category of "local government leaders" is used to describe any elected or hired member of local government, including Commissioners, City Managers, other staff and citizen advisory board members. Both Garden City and Dodge City have a City Manager style of

government. The City Manager is chosen by the five City Commissioners who are elected by the town. Each Commissioner serves one term as mayor, starting with whomever receives the most votes in the most recent election. In both Dodge City and Garden City, Commissioners are entirely white, and mostly men (Dodge City has two women sitting on the commission, while Garden City has one). The City Commissions in both Dodge City and Garden City are advised by a city staff and up to 10 citizen advisory boards. The citizen advisory boards assume different topics and advise the commission on anything from law enforcement to "cultural relations."

The term "elected government officials," as evidenced by the title, include only those who were elected by community members and include the Mayor and other Commissioners. Because there are only ten Commissioners, including the Mayor, I do not identify them by name, or even by which city they represent. Instead, when analyzing Commissioner narratives, I use "Commissioner" to represent any Commissioner from either Dodge City or Garden City.

Finally, the idea of "community" serves a specific purpose. "Community" is a geographical unit that represents all the individuals and institutions of either Garden City or Dodge City. "Community" is employed as a broad, encompassing boundary, and is never employed to represent specific factions in either Garden City nor Dodge City. Different racial and socio-economic groups are mentioned, but never categorized as bounded communities, precisely because they are not bounded. Identities are fluid, and even in the case of the EEN meetings, members of one group diverge in opinions on what is best for that group. As such, the idea of "community" is used to create a loose boundary around Dodge City and Garden City, differentiated from smaller, surrounding cities and other parts of the state.

This categorization of "community" also follows anthropologists Ahkil Gupta and James Ferguson's (1992) assertion that instead of looking at how communities are affected by capitalism and colonialism, anthropologists should address why and how communities are formed because of those processes. In other words, instead of assuming that communities pre-existed in a particular way, this thesis examines how global processes (i.e. migration) create communities in Garden City and Dodge City.

Narratives of Local Government Leaders

Jungle Run Car Show, Garden City:

Community members parked fancy and antique cars on the huge green lawn of the Lee Richardson Zoo. It was hot, and it was humid. Rhinos slept in the shade, and spider monkeys clung to chain linked fences, seemingly uninterested in the rows of cars. People also sat in the shade, and made conversation with perusing onlookers. After chatting with a few car owners, I approached two men sitting in lawn chairs beside a bright orange car. I guessed that the older man was in his eighties and the other much younger. The following is an excerpt from my field notes.

Both men lived in Garden City, but told me their house was "way outside of town." I asked them what they liked about Garden City. "Oh," the younger man mused, "I like the people. They are kind— friendly." I turned to the older man who also seemed to have an opinion. He told me, "Well, I'm a minority now. I don't like that." Just to clarify what he meant, I asked him if he identified as white, but he did not seem to understand my question. He turned to his son and asked him to "Translate." His son relayed, "She wants to know if you're white and feel like a minority." The older man turned to me again to say, "Yeah. I'm white. I don't like that I'm a mi-nority." He paused. "But now I got an African lady living with me in my house. She takes care of me. And I like that."

This interaction encapsulates a repeated pattern that arose in other interviews with Anglo community members: they seemed to value the labor of "others" over the people that actually perform that labor. Furthermore, the labor that is valued is a specific type of labor. For the man at the car show, it was low-wage labor of home health care. For local government leaders, it was

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the working class labor created by the meatpacking plants because they recognize that this industry contributes to economic growth in their community. Because this growth coincides with changing demographics, City Commissioners often addressed racial, ethnic and linguistic diversity in the community as a point of pride. At the same time, Commissioners were reluctant to address the lack of diversity on the City Commission. In one formal interview, a Commissioner told me that he thinks his Commission has "taken diversity and made it a positive instead of a negative."

Here, "diversity" is assumed to be a negative attribute, one that is only shaped into a positive outcome because of the work of an all-Anglo City Commission. As anthropologists studying multiculturalism note, institutionalized practices that celebrate diversity can also continue to oppress groups racialized as "other" (Hale 2005; Povinelli 2002, 1998). "Diversity" in the utterance above is framed as something that can be controlled, or something that the commission can "take" and "make." The transformation that "diversity" undergoes in this narrative, from something negative to something positive, comes at the cost of erasing inequality that is exacerbated as the community continues to grow. In both Garden City and Dodge City, poor working conditions in the meat packing plants, lack of adequate housing, and lack of access to health care are all vehicles that drive the socioeconomic gap between community members who are thriving off this system, and those who are suffering because of it.

The establishment of meatpacking plants coincided with an increase in income inequality, poor labor conditions, and the inability to meet new housing needs. Despite this, most City Commissioners I interviewed discussed a need for even more growth, in the form of population. Commissioners focus their efforts on increasing "growth" that contributes to diversity in their

community, while ignoring the struggles of individuals who constitute that growth. Despite an

increase in income inequality, poor labor conditions, and the inability to meet new housing

needs, every City Commissioner I interviewed discussed a need for even more growth in their

community. For a majority of Commissioners, growth is discussed in terms of population. For

example, when one Commissioner was asked what he would like to change about his communi-

ty, he described an increase in population:

Example 1[5]

01   Addison: If you could <u>change</u> one thing about Garden City, what would you

02   °change°?

03   Commissioner: I'd like to see us get to forty thousand.

04   Addison: Yeah=

05   Commissioner: =°Population.° (2.0) Because <u>once</u> you get to forty thousand, you

06   can ge:t (0.2) o:h <u>Olive</u> Garden and some of these other (1.0) restaurants…

In this case, those who will be able to experience the kind of idealized dining experience

offered by Olive Garden are not the same people who work the line at Tyson Fresh Meats Inc. In

the midst of growing income inequality and inadequate housing, when Commissioners express a

need for *more* growth, the disconnect between those in the community who benefit from growth

and those who do not become evident. Moreover, this divide, between those who can frequent an

Olive Garden, and those who work as cutters on the kill floor, is more than an income gap. It is a

divide drawn across racial lines as well, and this was made evident in the first narrative from the

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[5] All transcripts are written using conversation analysis transcription conventions (Sacks et. al. 1974).

car show. The man expressed disdain for the changing demographics in his community, while at the same time benefitting from that change.

Taking into account the idea that growth only benefits some members of the community, the following section investigates how local government leaders reconcile race in their community. I specifically address how the lack of minority representation in local government is justified using a number of narrative strategies, including the usage of stereotypes. Ultimately, local government leaders racialize political participation of non-Anglo community members in order to rationalize the lack of minority representation on the Commission.

"To get them to trust government is tough"

When faced with the question of why there are no minority people on the City Commission, local government leaders often immediately discussed Hispanic members of their community, and ideas about distrust in government. Mary Bucholtz and Kira Hall call this an "overt mention of identity categories" (2004, 594) in order to achieve a referential relationship between the category and some characteristic. In the following example, "Hispanic," becomes an index for foreigner, as the Commissioner says that Hispanic community members have experiences with foreign governments and a lack of experience with local government in the United States.

Before interviewing the Commissioner in this example, I was asked by a smiling secretary to wait in the lobby of his private office. I waited on a small leather couch that smelled intoxicatingly new. Fox News boomed through a flat screen TV, and for forty minutes, I watched the talking heads celebrate Mr. Trump above a headline: "Trump honoring ICE heroes." I wanted to vomit from the smell and from the noise, but was relieved when the Commissioner entered

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through a back door and apologized profusely for his lateness. I followed him to a small meeting room, and we took seats on opposite sides of a large conference table. Toward the end of the interview, I asked about minority representation on the City Commission.

Example 2

```
00    Addison:        What do you think needs to happen (0.2) in order for (0.2) mo:re
01    minorities to run?
02    Commissioner:        Well  >I think<  they need to understand the system.
03    Addison:        Hm=
04    Commissioner:        =a little mo:re. (0.2) Um. Y- you kno:w and it's it's kind of a- a
05    blanket statement and I don't mean it (0.2) to be: that way. But (0.2) you know the
06    Hispanics don't trust government. (1.0) You know just because in Mexico: and
07    Guatema:la. The governments are corrupt=
08    Addison:        =Mm. (1.0)
09    Commissioner:        So to get them to trust government is tough. (1.0)
```

In this example, the Commissioner explicitly mentions Hispanic community members in a way that reproduces the idea that Hispanics are inherently foreign (Santa Ana 2002; Lipsitz 1998; Lo 2016), and that Latinx government are inherently corrupt (Yeh 2018). While there are many Latinx community members in Garden City and Dodge City who were born in the United States, the Commissioner collapses this possibility by indexically linking "Hispanic" to governments in Mexico and Guatemala. This association is possible through a shared understanding of what Peirce identified as the "ground," or prior knowledge that drives the link between an object and its sign, or in this case between Hispanic identity and foreignness (Parmentier 1994).

Example 3: "There is a natural distrust of government"

Similar to Example 1, one of the City Managers in Example 2 collapses the categories of

othered governments and corruption. The processes of distinction (Bucholtz and Hall 2004) are

at work here in characterizing Mexican and South American governments as corrupt while as-

suming government in the U.S. is not. This interview was recorded at City Hall in the City Man-

ager's office. I asked the City Manager specifically why Latinx candidates are not elected to the

City Commission. She started to explain some of the reasons why specific individuals were not

electable, but then moved to say why there are not many Latinx candidates to begin with.

Example 3

```
00     City Manager: There is a natural. (0.2) distrust of govern↑ment fro::m (0.2) people that
02     came from Mexico↑ so. And °even some of the other areas of the k- of the (0.2) South
03     America.° They see the same thing. A lot of distrust in government, so why do I want to
04     b:e a part of it if I don't trust em? h. hh. So we're working to overcome all those issues.
```

Processes of distinction (Bucholtz and Hall 2004) are seen here in the City Manager's

characterizing of Mexican and South American people as having a distrust in government, while

it is assumed that local government is made up of mostly Anglo community members because

they do not share this distrust. Furthermore, processes of illegitimation are also realized in the

way that the City Manager constructs a distrustful identity and links it to Mexican and South

American community members in a way that delegitimizes their identity in the context of leading

at the local level. There also seems to be a lack of understanding about members in her commu-

nity, when she lists Mexico, and then lowers her voice, seemingly unsure, before stating, "and

even some of the other areas of the…South America." I wish I would have asked a follow up

question about what she meant by South America, seeing as only 0.2 percent of the population of Garden City identify as being from South America (US Census Bureau, 2010b).

Furthermore, the idea that this distrust in government is "natural" points to the fact that governments in those "othered" places are inherently corrupt. In this case, understanding what the city manager means by "natural distrust" relies on prior knowledge of indexical associations between Mexican community members, citizenship, and corruption. Discussion of "natural distrust" reinforces what is perceived as "common sense" ideas about race (Hill 2008; Omi and Winant 1994). Omi and Winant (1994), Chun and Lo (2015), and Alim (2016) show how dominant groups control what seems natural about race, where dominant forms of racialization become engrained and remain unquestioned. In this context, naturalizing distrust in government according to racial identity rationalizes the lack of participation among minority community members. Specifically, the idea of distrust in government in local government narratives is linked to Hispanic community members. The repetition of this narrative makes it seem as thought it is common sense. Jane Hill states that every time "common sense" ideas about race are reproduced through language, they become "available anew, and people use them to understand what has happened…" (2008, 19). In Example 2, the City Manager's narrative links the social identity of Mexican and South American with natural level of political participation, and re-inscribes stereotypes about race and distrust in government.

In both examples, local government leaders rationalize the lack of Hispanic (Example 1) and Mexican (Example 2) participation in local government by locating the blame in the racial categories themselves. The narrative strategy of linking Hispanic as inherently foreign, and then inherently foreign as distrusting government, shirks any responsibility the local government

leaders may have in the lack of minority representation in local government. Hill (2008) reveals how stereotypes are repeated in order to frame racial injustices as "cultural and personal inadequacies rather than as products of White racism" (2008, 23). Citing that Hispanic and Mexican members of the community are not involved in local government because they do not trust government highlights the inadequacies in groups other than themselves.

In both examples, local government leaders assume that some foreign governments are corrupt, but that the local government in southwest Kansas is not. They also assume that this foreign corruption is what keeps Hispanic and Mexican community members from participation in local government. To the second point, Fernando Villegas (2014) in Chicanx Studies shows how Mexican migrants to the U.S. often remain politically involved in their local Home Town Associations even upon moving to the U.S.

And to the first point, recent investigations into voter suppression in this region serve as contradictions to the assumption that local government in southwest Kansas is not corrupt. In Dodge City, a town of over 27,000 people, there is only one polling station for all elections. Dodge City made national news in October 2018 when the county clerk moved the only polling station to a new location outside of town that was also inaccessible to public transportation (McCormick 2018). The League of United Latin American Citizens, represented by the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), filed a lawsuit against Cox, citing that the polling situation in general, including the poll station change, disproportionately affects Latinx voters in Dodge City. Despite the lawsuit and other complaints, Cox did not open another polling station. According to Mark McCormick, the Strategic Director for the Kansas chapter of the ACLU, when a constituent e-mailed her and asked her to publicize a voter hotline for those who may be confused on

election day, the county clerk forwarded the e-mail to a coworker, along with the comment,

"LOL." A new polling site has not been opened, and the lawsuit is ongoing as of January 2019.

The ACLU's investigation concerned state and federal elections, but local election trends

reveal that a majority of voters are Anglo. 10 percent of eligible voters in Dodge City and 16

percent of eligible voters in Garden City voted in the elections for City Commissioners in 2017.

In Dodge City, 64 percent of votes came from voters who live in neighborhoods where at least 61

percent of the population is "White, Non-Hispanic," while in Garden City, 71 percent of voters

live in neighborhoods were over 48 percent of the population are "White, Non-Hispanic." This

data[6] shows that the majority of those who are voting in local elections may be Anglo community

members, as they reside in the neighborhoods of southwest Kansas where a majority of the popu-

lation is Anglo.

I think Villegas' work and the investigation of the ACLU goes to show that assumptions

based on racial categories and political participation are socially constructed to serve as recurring

narratives that on some surface protect an all-Anglo City Commission. In conclusion, local gov-

ernment leaders justify a lack of Hispanic representation in local government through stereotypes

that link Latinx identity with a distrust in government. Through this construction of a racial iden-

tity, City Commissioners are able to dodge any blame for which they could be held accountable.

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[6]This data is from my own investigation using voting records and demographic information about neighborhoods in each city. To interpret voting trends, I mapped the address of every individual who voted in the last Cit Commission election. I then used Statistical Atlas (2010) to assess the demographics of each of the voter's neighborhood.

<u>City Commission Meeting: National Day of the Cowboy</u>

Before the first Dodge City Commission meeting I attended, I parked my car in front of City Hall and watched men and women in cowboy hats, Pendleton shirts tucked into trophy belt buckles, and cowboy boots make their way through the front door. I started to get nervous that I dressed up too much for the meeting, in my business casual attire, but I made my way inside anyway. Upon entering City Hall, I easily found the small City Commission meeting room. There was a large raised platform where the City Commissioners were sitting and finishing up their Burger King dinner. Facing the podium were about five rows of chairs sparsely filled with community members. I took a seat on the left side and was reading Dodge City's mission state-ment on the wall, "Together we promote open communications with our community members to improve quality of life and preserve our heritage to foster a better future," when one of the Commissioners approached me with a friendly smile. "Now we've met before, I think?" She said in the polite way that Kansans do. She had not met me, so we introduced ourselves, and she made me feel very comfortable. She seemed very pleased that I was there, and we were still chat-ting when the Mayor rather abruptly called to her to take her seat.

The meeting was called to order, and after the prayer from Father Wesley and the pledge of allegiance, the first agenda item was addressed: the Resolution calling for the recognition of National Day of the Cowboy. Mr. Harris[7], also known as "the face of Dodge City" because, in-deed, his face is on many of the tourism advertisements for the city, stepped up to the podium. Facing the Commissioners, he read the resolution. The resolution was passed unanimously, and Robin Bailey from the Convention and Visitor's Department handed out "National Day of the

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[7] Real names are used in this section because the City Commission meeting was a public, televised meeting.

Cowboy" flags, proclaiming, "preserve the heritage," along with printed "Cowboy Code of Conduct" cards.

With the mission statement of Dodge City, "preserve *our* heritage," and the slogan of National Day of the Cowboy, "preserve *the* heritage," (emphasis added) I ask, whose heritage, exactly, and why now? Folk rationalizations of this holiday emphasize western heritage and cowboy culture, and it is no coincidence that this day coincides with the Dodge City Rodeo, one of the city's biggest events of the year. However, as the audience that attends the rodeo becomes more diverse, I wonder what role the city's National Day of the Cowboy project plays in the festivities.

National Day of the Cowboy seems to be a formal cultural revitalization project that celebrates white, settler identity in the face of ongoing demographic and economic changes in Dodge City. The celebration of cowboy identity can be easily linked to sociologist, George Lipsitz's argument that white people benefit socially and economically from white identity, and therefore "invest" in its reproduction (1998). Anglo community members in Dodge City invest in cowboy identity because it is made of their own reflection. As I argue throughout this section, that "reflection" is an Anglo, working class man. The following section analyzes transcripts from the public City Commission meeting described above as well as individual interviews that were completed later with some of the participants of the meeting. Given the social and economic power that City Commissioners and other city employees exercise over localities, analyzing how individuals at this meeting define their identity to themselves, to their community and beyond reveals how they understand the changing demographics in their community. This is important

because how Commissioners understand their identity and the identity of those they serve likely frames the kind of policies and community projects implemented by Commissioners.

Cowboys are Men

The designers and proponents of National Day of the Cowboy have specific ideas about what it means to be and to celebrate cowboy identity. At the City Commission meeting and in individual interviews, proponents clearly defined the cowboy figure (Goffman 1981) in terms of gender, race, religion and state pride. While proponents argue that cowboys are not gender-specific, there are still gendered skills associated with cowboy-ness. After Mr. Harris, dressed in a black cowboy hat, black silk vest, and silver sheriff star, read the National Day of the Cowboy resolution, Mayor Smoll asked him if he had anything else he would like to add. Before the mayor finishes his sentence, Mr. Harris interrupts him in the affirmative.

Example 4

00	Mayor Smoll:	Mr. <u>Harris.</u> (0.2) do you have <anything> else you'd [like to add?

00   Mayor Smoll: Mr. <u>Harris.</u> (0.2) do you have <anything> else you'd [like to add?

01   Mr. Harris: [Yes I do! (0.2) Uh one thing

02   we first need to <u>establish</u> u:h (1.0) when we talk <u>cow</u>boy. To me, 'cowboy' is not

03   necessarily <<u>gender</u>-specific.>

04   Someone in the audience: Mhm.

05   Mr. Harris: There's <u>mo:re</u> to being a cowboy. Than just knowing about cattle and

06   horses. U:h cowboy is a <u>lifestyle</u>. It's its's a way of <u>living</u>. Uh. Cowboys (0.2) ↑and (0.2)

07   ↑cow<u>girls</u>! As a matter of fact, it's interesting. Uh. The first <u>cowgirl</u> (0.2) that rode. Uh

08   the trail was actually from ↑Kansas. They say she was one of the <u>finest</u> cowboys among

09   them. No one <u>knew</u> that it was a cowgirl. >They came to the cowtown. It was pay day.

10   They got their pay.< Took her hat off. ((Removes his hat)) Shook her hair off—out.

11   ((Shakes his head)) and uh went along the way. >But I digress.< Uh cowboys and

12   cowgirls (0.2) uh live by a <u>code</u>. It's known as the cowboy code. Better know as the code

13   of the <u>west</u>.

This example highlights that while Mr. Harris claims that cowboy identity is not gender-specific, the unmarked form of "cowboy" is a man. This is made evident from the explicit story of a cowgirl, where the story was unique or "interesting" because of her gender. Furthermore, the unmarked actions that define cowboys, namely riding the cattle trail, is discussed as a normative-ly masculine action, where again, the story of cowboys riding the cattle trail is made interesting because one of the riders was a woman. This reveals a larger assumption—Bucholtz and Hall (2004) use the term "essentialism"— that unmarked cowboys are, and have always been, men. While this may seem like an obvious point, Bucholtz and Hall (2004) point out the importance of *not* taking unmarked identity categories for granted. This is because the characteristics that make an identity unmarked, are the same ones that afford an individual power within this community.

Cowboys are White

Historian Philip Deloria shows that playing cowboy, or performing cowboy identity, is always in juxtaposition to playing Indian (1998, 97). This is because white European American identity is dependent upon creating difference from both European and American Indian identity (Deloria 1998). Deloria describes that at the beginning of the twentieth century, there was a resurgence of both playing Indian and cowboy in boys' camps and mens' clubs across the coun-try. One prominent proponent of the pioneer identity was Daniel Carter Beard, a youth leader who created the Sons of Boone, later morphed into the Boy Scouts of America (Deloria 1998). Pioneer identity, for Deloria, is always in juxtaposition with Indian identity. Beard believed that

American Indians represented violent and unintelligent primitivism, and that instead, young men should celebrate the white, masculine pioneer of those who, according to him, modernized the frontier with new technologies (Deloria 1998, 97). For community members in Dodge City, too, the celebration of cowboy identity was in fact in opposition to American Indian identity and history, and proponents of National Day of the Cowboy also linked cowboy-ness to ideas about modernization. In the following interview with a representative in the Convention and Visitor's Department (CVD), they make explicit the juxtaposition of cowboy identity against American Indian identity, linking cowboy identity to "modern day."

The following interview was conducted on the second floor of a rickety old depot station that had been remodeled into a museum. The first floor was filled with exhibits and still serviced as an Amtrak station, serving two passenger trains a day. I made my way to the second floor, where the offices of the CVD were held. I was greeted by a CVD representative, who was kind enough to speak with me about National Day of the Cowboy.

Example 5.1

```
00   Addison:      I don't know if you heard any of the critiques of National Day of the
01                 Cowboy? (1.0) One is that it like erases American Indian history?
02   CVD:          Um. (0.2) Yeah I've heard that one. There's a bunch of controversy on that
03                 one. Um (1.0) Our thing is. There's the cowboys and then there's the Indian. We are
04                 respecting the cowboy—we are noting, we are (1.0) they— that heritage. That section. I
05                 think if (0.2) there (0.6) should be (0.8) that other (0.2) day acknowledgment with >don't
06                 forget the Indians< and the Native Americans that were here before us you know so. I
07                 say. This is one subject↕ (1.0) um when there are so many more. That this is what made
08                 modern day today is modernizing the horses and >stuff like that.< That's what. Brought
09                 that. Here. You know? So (1.0) is that really it is another patriotic thing, but it's
10                 remembering your history.
```

This narrative makes clear that cowboy identity is pitted against and is completely distinct from Indian identity. This dichotomy is drawn along racial lines, but also seems to differentiate the "modern" cowboy from Native Americans who were "here before us.". In terms of modernization, the CDV representative's comment about horses seems to suggest that Anglo cowboys introduced equine technology to the region. In reality, however, horses were introduced to the Americas by Spanish colonizers, and adopted by some Indigenous groups. Pekka Hämäläinen suggests that horses bred by the Comanche were of "better quality" than Spanish-bred ones (2008, 245). In this sense, horses were already being used before western Kansas was colonized.

The suggestion that cowboys introduced horses to southwest Kansas reveals echoes of Beard's infatuation with "taming the frontier," (Deloria 1998, 97), especially when the interviewee mentions later in the interview that, "during Dodge City days, we remember with the rodeo how the west was won." Describing the west as a platform through which cowboys were the winners also implies that American Indians were the "losers." A winning and losing dichotomy erases the colonial violence of cowboy settlers by envisioning winning and losing as some sort of equal-opportunity game.

At the same time, this kind of rhetoric is fraught with anxiety. In lines 03, 07, and 09, there are uncharacteristically long pauses while the interviewee searches for words. In line 05, there are so many pauses that a reader may lose the meaning of the whole utterance. Deloria says that there is often white anxiety around defining American identity (1998). This is because, as Deloria describes, white settler identity is haunted with the "dispossession and conquest of Indi-

an people," (1998, 182). In this case, the interviewee tries to circumnavigate the fact that cele-

brating "how the west was won" indirectly acknowledges a hideous past, whose effects continue

to shape the community's present.

However, while anxiety surrounding white settler identity stems from its juxtaposition

against American Indian identity, Deloria explains that in the early twentieth century, the resur-

gence of pioneer identity was also a response to white anxiety concerning the new waves of Eu-

ropean migrants who were settling across the states (1998). This looks similar to proponents of

National Day of the Cowboy who want to celebrate Anglo heritage at the onset of dramatic de-

mographic change in their community.

In the following example, I attempted to address how the CVD representative imagined

cowboy identity in relation to migrants in their community. I took seriously the "cow" in "cow-

boy" and asked the CVD representative if migrants, who now do a majority of work with cattle

in the meatpacking plants, are cowboys. After a few minutes of talking through migrant work

and cowboy identity, the CVD representative answered:

Example 5.2

```
00      CVD:  I- I think. I think it could ↑be. (0.2) I think they could be their own type of
01            cowboy, cowgirl. I <think>, you know. A lot of the Hispanics come up and they've.
02            They've done the ranching and <farming.> You know that's how they survived.
03            Supplying their own °food 03 and stuff so° I think it could ↑be. You know, I think
04            everybody's heritage is a little different so probably the way they define it will differ.
```

While responding to my admittedly leading question, the CDV representative first char-

acterizes migrants as possibly "their own type of cowboy," but later refers to Hispanic communi-

ty members as those who have firsthand experience with ranching and farming. Even so, the representative does not immediately categorize the Hispanic community members as cowboys, citing a difference in "heritage" (line 04) that may lead Hispanic community members not to identify as cowboys. At the least, this example reveals that the unmarked category of cowboy identity is that of the *Anglo* man because when other racial categories are discussed, there is hesitation and discussion of differences in heritage that cause the representative to not immediately, but maybe eventually, define cowboys outside of whiteness.

This excerpt also reveals that cowboy identity, as part of a cultural revitalization project, is not based solely on a revival of historical data. If it were, Hispanic identity and cowboy identity would be synonymous. Historian José E. Limón, in his chapter about Latinx history in the midwest, states that many of the cowboys, or vaqueros, in this region were Latino (2017). Limón describes that the settlements in between cattle trails were segregated, and after the cattle trail days ended, the midwest was populated with settlements that "maintained a racist labor hierarchy" and exploited Mexican workers (2017). Exploitation of Mexican labor in southwest Kansas took the form of railroad construction in Dodge City and beet plantations and factories in Garden City. Because the representative from CVD struggled to envision National Day of the Cowboy as a celebration of Hispanic heritage alongside European heritage, National Day of the Cowboy is framed as a cultural revitalization project that not only is juxtaposed against American Indian identity, but Hispanic identity as well.

Cowboys are Working Class

While discussing the unmarked form of cowboy identity as white and masculine, I also think it is crucial to highlight that National Day of the Cowboy in Dodge City is a celebration that is also built on the socioeconomic distinctions between eastern and western Kansas. Sociologist John Hartigan, in his cultural analysis of white people, argues that scholars who study whiteness should decouple some forms whiteness from dominance because not all white people are part of the elite (2005). This is especially true in southwest Kansas where most Anlgo community members of Dodge City and Garden City belong to the working class. As such, part of cowboy identity in Dodge City is a subversive distinction between Anglo, western Kansans and urban, eastern Kansans, who are often imagined as the wealthy elite (Frank 2004). This is made evident in the way Mr. Harris and the CVD representative refer to cowboy culture as a "dying culture" in the face of urbanization, as "about dirt on your boots," and "taking care of god's creatures."

Cowboy is a National Identity

Finally, the designers and proponents of the National Day of the Cowboy Resolution anchor the cowboy figure to the state. Ray Schrader explains the national discourse of National Day of the Cowboy, and expresses disappointment in other states that have yet to recognize. National Day of the Cowboy is a national non-profit organization that works to "contribute to the preservation of America's cowboy culture and pioneer heritage…" (National Day of the Cowboy, 2018), and thus far fourteen states including Kansas recognize the fourth Saturday in July as National Day of the Cowboy. The following excerpt comes from Ray Schrader, a Dodge City com-

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munity member, who came up to the podium and introduced himself, "I'm Ray Schrader in case you don't know who I am. I'm fairly new to the community," after which the entire room erupted into laughter. This was because Mr. Schrader is a long-time resident of Dodge City. After nodding his head to the laughter, he shared a narrative about when he interviewed Bethany Braley, the director of the National Day of the Cowboy non-profit, national organization. Below, he explains her time in Dodge City:

Example 6

```
00    Mr. Schrader:  >I want to just say that< she [Braley] had (1.0) a very good time in Dodge
01    City. She appreciates everything that the city has done in regards to the National Day of
02    the Cowboy. And the Convention and Visitor's Department. This is one of the better
03    rodeos that <she has> lined up in the <National Day of the Cowboy.> We only have
04    twelve states at the current time, and she's just a little bit perturbed (0.2) at ↑these
05    ↓mid↑west↓ern states (0.2) for not joining in.
```

In this example, Mr. Schrader explains that Braley was perturbed, but also reveals that he agrees with her by using "only" to diminish the number of states that have adopted National Day of the Cowboy, and also by pausing before enunciating "these midwestern states" in a very stern tone. By showing disapproval in the states that have not adopted National Day of the Cowboy, Mr. Schrader assumes a moral stance that looks down on the states that have not adapted the resolution as an acknowledgement of Kansas' higher moral esteem. Finally, by connecting Dodge City to national-level initiatives, he is able to give authority to a local identity. Bucholtz and Hall (2004) describe this process as "authorization," where some identities are given more weight because they are backed by larger institutions. In this example, Cowboy identity is "authorized" (Bucholtz and Hall 2004) through its connections to a larger, national project.

Overall, cowboy identity is a way of maintaining white dominance in a settler town that was created by the violent dispossession of Indigenous peoples and the exploitation of Mexican labor, but is now seeing a flip from a majority-Anglo population to a majority-minority population. The demographic shift coincides with the resurgence of celebrating cowboy identity, and I do not think that is a coincidence. The celebration of cowboy identity among Anglo community members strengthens their settler sense of belonging, and acts as a unifying cultural revitalization project. This project is completed through explicit texts like the "Cowboy Code of Conduct" and material objects such as cowboy heritage flags that now fly beneath the Kansas one outside of city hall, and in the yards of private residences. As I have tried to show through the excerpts above, the unmarked cowboy identity is that of the white, male cowboy, and the City Commission and other proponents of cowboy identity "authorize" (Bucholtz and Hall 2004) this identity by tying it to a larger state project.

<center>Conclusion</center>

The establishment of meatpacking plants in Garden City and Dodge City changed the social, economic and physical boundaries of both cities. Poverty increased by 5.8% from 1980 to 2000 (Stull and Broadway 2008), and those who identify as Hispanic came to represent a majority of the community. However, while local government leaders seem aware of racial and ethnic diversity in vague terms, their narratives revealed a lack of concern for poor working conditions, low wages, and unmet housing needs of those who contribute to the community's claim to diversity.

Even anthropologists Stull and Broadway seem to miss the point. While they cite dangerous working conditions, increased poverty, and a high turnover rate for meatpacking line workers[8], they also describe Garden City as a harmonious place where the "American Dream" is alive and well (2008, 130). Stull (2011) still argues, however, that "Garden Citians have learned to embrace the steady stream of newcomers" (10), but it is exactly this type of rhetoric that creates a divide between who can be a "Garden Citian" and who remains a "newcomer." An increase in racial diversity does not correspond to an increase in racial equality, and painting southwest Kansas as a harmonious, multicultural space erases the challenges and exploitation that migrants to Garden City and Dodge City face.

Sociologist Alexis Silver, in her research concerning undocumented migrants in rural North Carolina, suggests that if elected officials recognized that migrants are a "resource to invest in, rather than a threat or burden to be dealt with, the walls of exclusion that have long stifled the growth of so many will begin to crumble" (2018, 158). I found, however, that local gov-

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[8] Tyson Fresh Meats replaces an average of 1600 to 2200 workers a year (Stull and Broadway 2008)

ernment leaders in southwest Kansas do indeed recognize that migrants make exponential contributions to both Garden City's and Dodge City's economy. Even still, local government leaders often turn blind eyes to the struggles of migrants and working class Latinx community members that have been detailed throughout this paper.

Not only are these struggles dismissed, but local government leaders also do a lot of identity work in order to rationalize and justify the current state of affairs. This paper focusses on two specific identities, Latinx identity and cowboy identity as they emerge across speech genres, to reveal how each are employed to defend white, hegemonic power. The emergence of Latinx identity in local government narratives is an example of a local "model of identity" (Wortham 2011) that is tied to macro-level anti-migrant discourse. To local government leaders, Latinx identity is overtly linked to a "natural" distrust in government. This stereotype relies both on the process of distinction (Bucholtz and Hall 2004) and on indexical associations.

The process of distinction plays out when differences between Anglo community members and Latinx community members are made salient in the narratives of local government leaders. These narratives then rely on implicit and explicit indexical associations that link Hispanic identity to migrant identity, migrants to corrupt government, and corrupt government to a naturally occurring distrust in any government. Finally, the indexical associations between Latinx identity and distrust in government are used to rationalize the lack of Latinx participation in local government. These narratives frame "distrust in government" as something inherent to Latinx identity, rather than an inherent problem in the community. Moreover, Latinx identity is a racialized identity, and every time these indexical associations surround it are reproduced, local government leaders reinscribe dominant ideologies about race and political participation. By

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stereotyping Latinx community members as distrustful of government, local government leaders frame this stereotype to be a common sense idea about race that becomes an unquestioned assumption carried out across different local government leader narratives, and used to justify an all-Anglo City Commission.

Cowboy identity, on the other hand, is not necessarily a "model of identity" (Wortham 2011), but is instead a figure (Goffman 1981) of white, masculine, settler identity that emerges in the face of dramatic demographic changes in the community. In City Commission meetings and one-on-one interviews with proponents of National Day of the Cowboy, the process of authorization (Bucholtz and Hall 2004) links cowboy identity to both local government institutions and federal institutions. While "cowboy culture" is celebrated across speech genres, the emergence of cowboy identity excludes a majority of Dodge City's population on the grounds that the unmarked cowboy figure is white and masculine.

Ultimately, representations of Latinx community members and cowboys are two manifestations of identity work in discourse that local government leaders employ. This thesis characterizes identity as it plays out in the language of local government officials. Often, local linguistic practices reveal larger, racialized structures that work to maintain white, masculine hegemony at the expense of the rest of the community. Because of the immense amount of structural and ideological power they hold in the community (Flentje and Aistrup 2010), their rationalizations of migration, race, multiculturalism and identity have rippling effects across the community. This includes what kinds of projects are prioritized and implemented by local government leaders.

The introduction introduced a few community members of Color who were struggling in the twister of inadequate housing, racial discrimination, and poverty. These struggles are often

ignored by local government leaders. Moreover, their lack of participation in local government is rationalized as inherent to their identity, and they are even disenfranchised from exercising their right to vote (see page 39). However, women, migrants and people of color challenge the current state of affairs, and challenge the identity work performed by local government leaders. In fact, it is women, migrants and people of Color who work to change their community through positions on the Cultural Relations Advisory Boards, in the Ethnic Empowerment Network, and in the Unified School Districts. So, while I began with experiences and narratives from migrants in the community, I also end with a narrative from one migrant, Michelle.

Michelle serves on the Cultural Relations Advisory Board for Garden City, and I met her one hot and humid day at the local library. We sat outside on cement benches while her children played behind us, occasionally laughing in the background. Similar to my question to the City Commissioners, I asked Michelle why there was no minority representation on the Commission. She began her response by listing the ways in which minority community members are excluded from participating in local government. She then paused before stating that she was not sure how to get more minority community members involved, but then definitely stated:

Example 7

```
01    Michelle:    I'm not going to wait for you to define that I am a part of you. I am
02    coming anyway. h h h h hhh h. I'm here you're stuck with me. And part of it is because I
03    am a lady in my early forties, right? I have children (1.0) um in the traditional language
04    of saying educated, I would say I am educated. Um (0.2) I would say I am economically
05    stable. Um (0.2) I have lived my past life. I am raising my children. I have had my
06    experience. I have— I am beyond sitting and waiting. I am at a time where I go. I go! I
07    define myself more by my responsibility than by my rights. So that is how. That's where
08    I am at in my stage of life and I'm not just going to sit there and wait for you.
```

Michelle states that she is not going to wait for leadership in local government to say it is "okay" for her to participate in local government, to advocate for better living and working conditions. Even though City Commissioners justify a lack of minority participation in local government with racist stereotypes, and even though City Commissioners advocate for growth that disproportionately disadvantages migrants, Michelle, a migrant herself, proclaims that she is not going to wait for the Commission to change. Instead, she is going to instigate the change herself; she is "coming anyway," and undoubtedly, she is already there as a member of the Cultural Relations Advisory Board and Ethnic Empowerment Network.

Figure 1

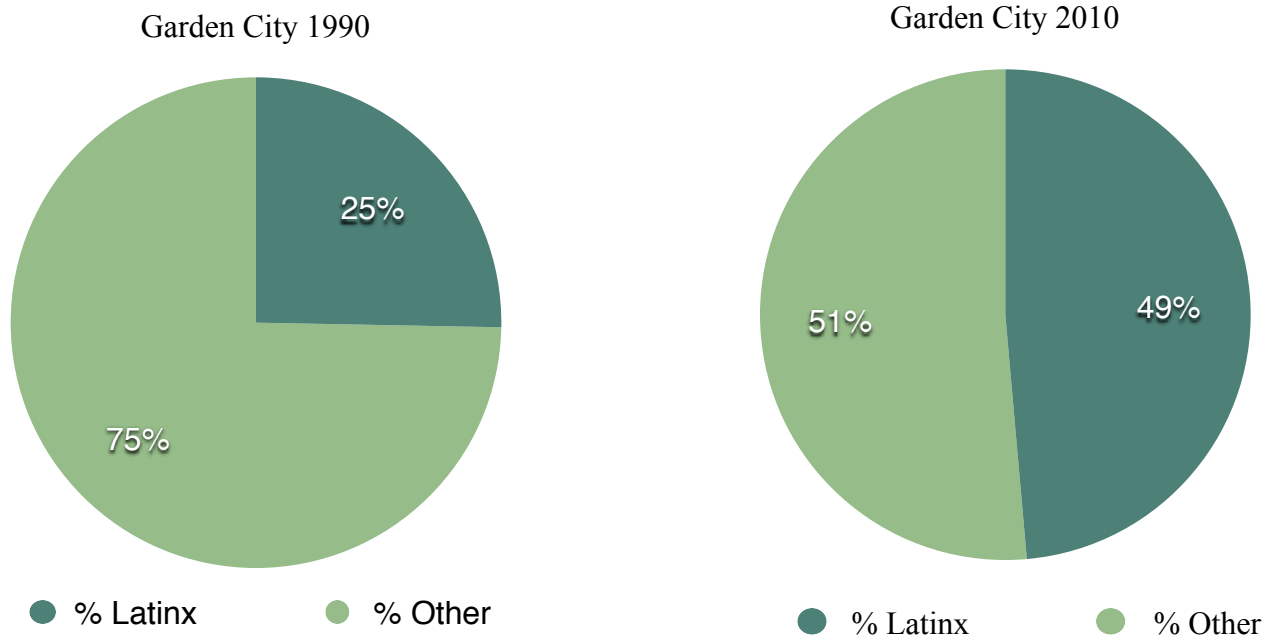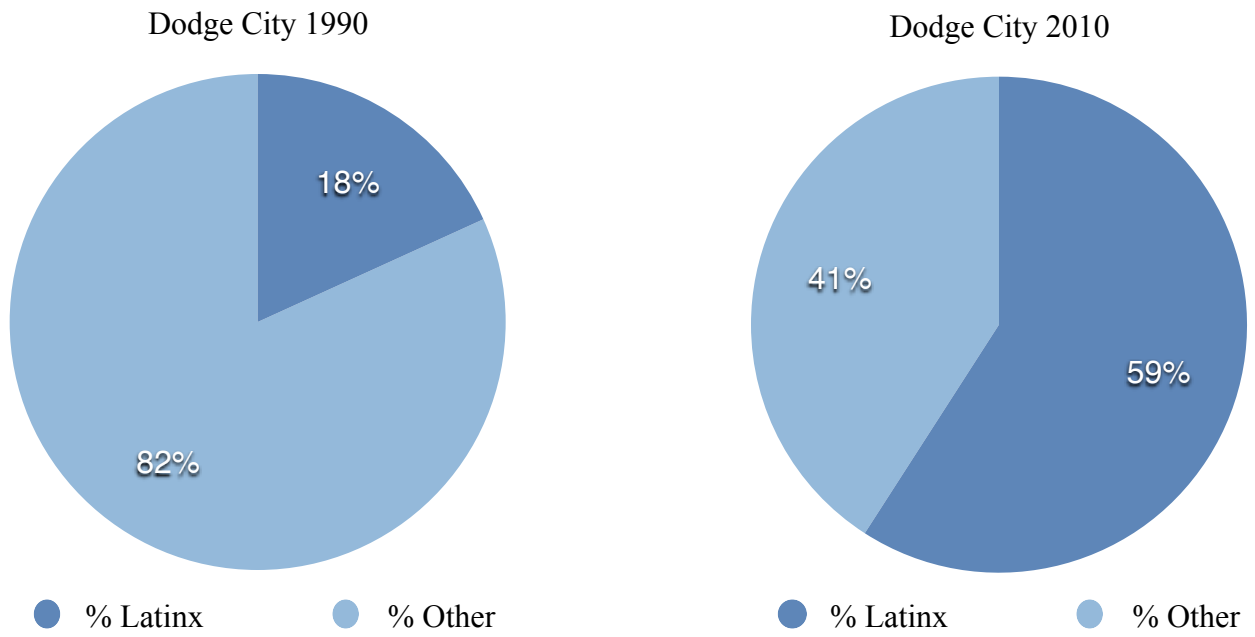Garden City 1990

Garden City 2010

Figure 2

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