

2012 Miraftab, F. "Emerging Transnational Spaces: Meat, Sweat and Global (re)Production in the Heartland." *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 36(6):1204-1222. The final, definitive version is available at

<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/journal/10.1111/%28ISSN%291468-2427>

Emergent Transnational Spaces: Meat, Sweat and Global (re)Production in the Heartland

Faranak Miraftab

Abstract

This paper asks whether locality and the varied resources, networks and racialized histories of local actors make a difference in the experience of immigrants and their transnational practices. Such questions are typically explored in metropolitan centers and global cities, but the present work results from an ethnographic study of a previously all-white rural Illinois town where the meat processing industry recruited a labor force trans-locally among Latin Americans and West Africans. The paper reports on the experience of this rapidly diversifying town where both formal politics and the liberal democratic channels of citizens' participation in governance remain exclusionary. Despite this, the diverse immigrant populations have achieved a certain inclusion in public institutions and public spaces. Paying attention to the dynamics developing across immigrant groups through everyday spaces of interaction within their residential community, the essay argues that the kinds of mediating spaces local context offers are critical to the ability of diverse immigrant groups to renegotiate the interracial social and spatial relations they encounter in a highly contested and constrained context where a global corporation is the sole local employer.

Keywords: transnationalism, meat packing towns; immigration, Midwest rural towns, informal politics.

Introduction

This paper focuses on the dramatic social spatial change in Beardstown, Illinois, a town with a population of about 6,213 as per 2010 census. Until the 1980s Beardstown remained all-white. Sociologist Jim Loewen (2006) categorized it historically as a "sundown town," a place where black people had to clear out before sunset. Today, however, 30% of Beardstown residents are foreign born, with a 3500% change in foreign born residents between the 1990 and 2000 censuses. As in many other small Midwestern towns, the meat processing industry has driven an economic and social transformation. The economic focal point in Beardstown is the local meatpacking plant which Cargill Corporation took over in 1987 after the previous owner, Oscar Mayer, shut down its local plant. Cargill now employs 1,700 production floor workers who slaughter and pack more than 18,000 hogs per day. To fill these high-risk, low paying, and back-breaking positions, the company has aggressively recruited a quite diverse immigrant population. In response to an annual labor turnover rate as high as 100 per cent, this recruitment process began in the early 1990s with efforts to attract Latin Americans, predominantly

Mexicans but also some Central Americans. Since then the company has also head hunted for workers among Cubans and Puerto Ricans. Though precise figures are difficult to obtain, it is estimated that there are currently some 2,500 Spanish speakers residing in Beardstown. While the major external recruiting has focused on Latinos, in the early 2000s Cargill recruited French-speaking West African workers to the plant, among them highly educated doctors, lawyers, professors and engineers. This cohort was predominantly Togolese, though some recruits came from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Burkina Faso, Guinea and Senegal. Overall, about 350 West and Central Africans presently live in or near Beardstown.¹

This paper will focus on the experience of these Latino and West African immigrants in Beardstown. In particular, I will examine the methods by which these workers, through their own agency, reconstituted public spaces and to a lesser extent, public institutions in Beardstown. The study of immigrants' experiences in emerging transnational spaces is important because demographic research indicates a rise in the number and rate of immigration to non-traditional destinations —e.g. smaller and rural towns in non-gateway states of the Midwest (see Zúñiga and Hernández-León 2005; Lichter and Johnson 2006; Kandel and Cromartie 2004; Guzmán and Diaz McConnell 2002). The pre-existing knowledge about immigrants' experiences, however, is dominated by insights gained from examination of metropolitan centers as traditional recipients of immigrant populations. Lack of adequate and in depth examination of such processes in newly emerging immigrants' destinations risks a simplified understanding of their experiences, one that assumes immigrants' despair and victimization and fails to account for the varieties of agency they exercise in non-traditional destinations.

The paper includes six sections. The first offers an overview of the literature that informs this study. The second details project methodology. The third section briefly discusses the local racialized histories. Section four presents the differential resources, constraints and immigration histories of the main immigrant groups in this town. Section five, looks beyond formal politics and workplace, highlighting immigrants' achievements in making this former all-white town their new home. The concluding section discusses whether and how locality affects the transnational processes constituting and constituted by a local community, and how an ethnographic understanding of transnationalism from below allows us to see varied forms of resistance and people's agency that otherwise might be ignored.

1. Status of knowledge

The literature on demographic change in the U.S. tells us that immigrants are increasingly moving to non-traditional destinations (Zúñiga and Hernández-León 2005; Durand, Massey and Capoferro 2005). In the last two decades, more immigrants headed to rural towns and states that were not traditional immigrant gateways. This is true for both Latinos and Africans. Between 1990 and 2000, for example, Hispanic immigrant population increased by 83 percent in the Midwest — a proportional increase higher than any other region in the United States (US Census 2000 SF 1, US Census 1990 STF 1 cited in Miraftab and McConnell 2008). Between 2000 and 2005, the number of African immigrants increased by 60 percent in the Midwest compared to 29 percent in the Northeast, 37 percent in the West, and 49 percent in the South (Source: US Census 2000, US Census 1990). Like Latinos, the growth of African immigrants is not necessarily in large cities and metropolitan centers. In Illinois, for example, the 2000 to 2007 percentage of change in the number of African immigrants was 95.3% for urban versus 239 percent for rural areas (US Census Bureau, Census 2000. US Census Bureau, ACS 2005, 2006, and 2007).

The literature on the meat industry and its restructuring reveals how the industry's restructuring and rural industrialization strategy contributed to the observed demographic change in Midwestern communities (Kandel and Parrado 2005; Griffith, Broadway, and Stull 1995). This scholarship links the growth of immigrant populations in rural areas to changes in production and consumption of food, in particular of meat and poultry (Broadway 1995). This work concludes that the industry's changing strategies for accumulation of capital and reduction of the need for skilled labor (spatial relocation to rural areas, vertical integration, and technological innovation) all ultimately contributed to labor recruitment among immigrants to maintain low pay for high risks jobs.

The kind of ethnic and social tensions that emerge by recruitment of a minority and ethnicized labor force has been the subject of two sets of research: labor studies and community studies. Labor studies that focus on workplace dynamics among different ethnic groups help us understand the role of ethnic minorities' recruitment in splitting the labor market. Recruitment of ethnicized labor, some stress, constructs a dual labor market which sets one group against the other, weakens labor's collective bargaining power and undermines the gains of the unionized labor force (Bonacich 1972; Farley 2005 [1982]). Others argue that indeed white and more senior members of the labor force are beneficiaries of splitting or segmenting the labor market as they gain in various ways from industry's utilization of more exploited ethnicized minority workers (Edwards 1973). Community studies concerned with the local effects of industry minority recruitment strategies seek to answer a different question, namely: what do rural industrialization strategies and recruitment of immigrants to plants in small towns mean for Midwest communities? They highlight how the sudden surge of immigrants into these communities heightens the burden and pressure on public agencies, social services (Erickson 1990) and housing stock (Griffith 1995a), increases crime (Gouveia and Stull 1995) and multiplies health hazards (Hakenberg and Kokulka 1995). They also indicate how these processes revive small town America and bring life and business to them (Grey and Woodrick 2005). Some argue that white Anglos maintain social networks separate from newcomers (Millard, Chapas and Crane 2004) or never interact with ethnic minorities outside institutions of clergy and social work,² while others see small steps towards a newly brewed melting pot (Grey 1995). What is common across these studies, however, is that they predominantly focus on the relationship between one or several immigrant groups and the dominant native born population, what Lamphere and colleagues (1992) refer to as the established residents. The inter-racial relations across immigrant groups and the transnational dimension of these interactions are less examined in this literature.

The present essay contributes to the above conversations by (a) moving beyond a bi-polar relationship between a single immigrant group and the native born dominant group; (b) focusing on mediating spaces outside the production floor; and (c) employing a transnational perspective that accounts for differential trans-local resources, constraints and obligations of immigrant groups. Based on these considerations the study is able to gain a greater sense of agency among differentiated immigrant groups not collapsed as one single entity nor confined to their spaces of paid labor.

The conceptual framework of this study is informed and enhanced by three analytical approaches: First, the concept of transnationalism from below (Guarnizo and Smith 2008) which urges investigators to examine local and trans-local processes and everyday practices for understanding the agency of local actors in construction of global processes. They stress the

meso level analysis that takes into account not only the macro level processes involved in circulation and accumulation of global capital but also local actors involved in the micro level processes and practices that constitute the global in the most immediate and everyday spaces. Second, the concept of mediation as developed through anthropological works of Louise Lamphere and colleagues (1992) has helped to develop the focus of this study on social interactions outside the workplace. They distinguish mediating arenas, institutions and sites, whereby, for example the workplace is a mediating arena, the corporation is a mediating institution, and a particular plant is a mediating site. In their study of new immigration in the U.S., they illustrate a wide range of interrelations emerging between the new immigrants and established residents and suggest these are not just a matter of race, ethnicity or immigration status but also influenced by the specificities of the mediating institutions and sites through which they interact (1992:2). Third, the concept of non-collective action as developed by Bayat (2010) has helped to further recognize the forms of agency in these emerging transnational spaces in the heartland. Bayat, focusing on highly constrained political environments, brings to light the non-formal methods of resistance that he calls “quiet encroachments” by the subordinate groups. “The art of presence” as his work highlights may indeed allow subordinate groups to assert their agency in ways that otherwise would seem non-existent.

2. Methodology

In order to understand this complex transnational social space intimately connected to far-away global locations in Togo and Mexico, I have relied on a multi-sited global ethnography conducted in the span of five years (2005-2010). Ethnographic research is particularly demanding among populations with a heightened suspicion of outsiders. In this case researching populations whose livelihood hinged on one sole employer and whose (il)legality was a contentious public issue, it took more than two years to build the kinds of trust relations with residents that afforded me in-depth interviews as well as visits to their homes and in many cases to their families abroad.³ Beardstown data was collected through interviews, surveys, focus groups and review of published and unpublished documents. A total of 70 Semi-structured and in-depth interviews were conducted with key informants (5), authorities (6), members of civic associations/NGOs (7) and staff at public institutions (10) and residents.⁴ The latter included 27 native born English-speaking, 17 French-speaking, and 20 Spanish-speaking immigrant residents.⁵ Of the total 19 were currently or previously employed at Cargill’s local plant.

Surveys were conducted in 2008 through mail-in and door-to-door visits. All residents of Beardstown and Rushville received a housing survey in English, Spanish or French.⁶ via the post office. I prepared these in collaboration with the Illinois Institute of Rural Affairs and University of Illinois Extension Office. Completed survey responses received (468 in English, 45 in Spanish and 6 in French) indicated the need for a further effort to complete additional surveys among the French-speaking immigrant group. The responses offered housing information for an additional 20 French-speaking resident households who were contacted randomly based on the addresses previously used for the mail-in surveys. Furthermore, to obtain information on immigrants’ household composition, migration, and remittances, a member of each immigrant group administered additional surveys at their respective community events and gatherings.⁷ Three focus groups were also held in 2008 through ESL classes with mixed groups of Hispanic and African students.⁸

Moreover, to get a better understanding of my observations, families of Beardstown immigrants and returned immigrants were interviewed in Mexico (summers 2008 and 2010) and

in Togo (summer 2010). My field work in Mexico and in Togo provided great insight in regard to the differential trans-local resources and constraints that oblige immigrants to make a move away from their communities of origin yet continue to maintain close ties to those communities. Most important in the Mexican context were several Beardstown immigrants who had already returned to their communities of origin. I was able to hear the unhindered account of the conditions of work, injury settlements and recruitment practices of the corporation by interviewees who were no longer restricted by employment consequences. While my insights benefited from the information obtained through all aspects of fieldwork in various sites, in this particular essay I focus only on information collected empirically in Beardstown and its adjacent town Rushville (hereafter referred to as the Beardstown area).⁹

3. The Racialized Histories

Beardstown, Illinois, has gone through an extraordinary social transformation in its recent history. For much of the 20th century through perceived or real threats of violence, this town remained almost all-white. The Census data for 1890 to 2000¹⁰ confirm the striking absence of populations other than whites in the town — in particular the absence of blacks through the 1980s. Elders recall only a few people of color who then lived in the area. They recall the town having a black male cook who worked and lived at the local hotel but was seldom known to have left the premises. They also recall two non-white children growing up in Beardstown: a biracial boy whose black father did not live with the family, and a black girl adopted by a local white family. Old residents have different interpretations of this absence of people of color in their town. Some see it as kind of coincidental, that “there was just nothing for blacks to do here.” Other interviewees provide different accounts:

They could not stay in town. Everyone knew that. Even someone like the great world champion Jessie Owens had to leave town at night. . . . in 1960 or so, when Jessie Owens was brought in to talk at the town’s high school athletic banquet. . . . after the event he had to go to Jacksonville to spend the night there. That’s just the way it was (interviewee # 30, 2008).

The racial demographics of the town started to change in the 1990s. The story, somewhat typical of most rural towns diversified by their meat packing plants, is this:

In 1985 following a fierce and long collective bargaining process Oscar Mayer (OM), the packing company that preceded Cargill, shut down its Beardstown plant. The departure of the biggest employer in town caused an anxious moment for a local population by and large tied to the work in the plant. The mayor reflected the collective desperation of the time when in a town council meeting he declared “I’d negotiate with the devil if I thought it would help” (*Illinois Star Daily* May 14, 1985).¹¹ Taking advantage of this anxiety Cargill purchased the old OM plant and started operation in 1987 with an enticement package that included a 20-year tax-abatement and state stipend of \$215,000¹² to promote local labor force training. When Cargill re-opened the plant, the company shed its predominantly white senior labor force for less experienced workers hired at \$6.50 an hour instead of the \$8.75 that Oscar Mayer had paid. This drop in wages made the jobs less attractive for most white skilled workers. By the early 1990s, the company’s turnover rate reached close to 100 percent. The plant shifted to trans-local and trans-national recruitment among a cheaper, more desperate labor force. Cargill sent its mobile recruiters in a company van, including the firm’s nurse and Human Resource personnel, to towns on both sides of the Mexican border. This yielded brought first wave of Mexican workers.

Interviewees gave an account of how the subsequent Mexican workers arrived through immigrants' networks¹³ — the same mechanism that followed the first wave of recruitment among French-speaking Africans. In 2007 after an ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement) raid took place in Beardstown, Cargill sent its mobile recruitment teams to San Jose, Puerto Rico, and to little Havana, Florida, in search of low-waged workers with green cards or citizenship. Not long after, a cohort of Cuban and Puerto Rican workers arrived at the Beardstown plant (interviewees # 27, 2008 and # 37, 2009). The plant's persistent trans-local recruitment among minorities combined with a bonus system for employees who succeeded in recruiting a worker, contributed to lowering the labor turnover rate for Cargill's Beardstown plant from close to 77% in 1990 to 52% in 2008.¹⁴

Elsewhere (Miraftab forthcoming) I discuss how the transnational labor recruitment strategies of Cargill are linked to the broader restructuring of global capitalism. To improve their margins of profit corporations rely not only on the restructuring of production (eg relocation of production plants across the border), but also tap into a cheaper and more vulnerable labor force that crosses the border for employment. Corporations like Cargill as practiced by their meat packing plants like the one in Beardstown rely on temporal and spatial reorganization of labor force social reproduction. Drawing on ethnographic data collected in U.S. (Beardstown), Mexico and Togo, I discuss in more depth the processes I call *global restructuring of social reproduction* whereby transnational families and support networks of Cargill workers, be it women, men, grandparents, siblings, neighbors and friends, in communities of origin subsidize social reproduction of the labor force at Cargill. They take on the responsibilities for care at the beginning and end of workers' life cycle —processes that precede and succeed their most productive working age in this industry; they offer emotional and bio physical care of children Cargill workers leave behind; they offer support for the reproduction of workers cultural identity and place in communities of origin and destination.

In this paper however, my chief concern is inter-racial dynamics and the experience of immigrants in small non-gateway towns. To understand these dynamics as they will be discussed later in the paper, it is important to highlight two points in the more recent social and spatial history of Beardstown: a) the 1996 violence; b) the initially divided residential geography among the immigrant labor force.

The 1996 violence took place when a Mexican shot and killed a local white man and ran away. Angry whites burned a six-foot-tall cross in the plaza; then torched to the ground the Mexican tavern where the shooting occurred. The following day the KKK marched through the town. One Mexican resident who was a child at the time recalled how scared he was during the days that followed the incident.

“They [my brothers] didn't want me to leave the house. . . . [They] were telling me I couldn't go out, walk home or anything because they were worried that somebody would hurt us. Just the (*sic*) environment of fear. . . . Some people even saw them with their masks, and clothes, and they went around and put crosses, red crosses where the Mexicans lived. . . . That was kind of a threat or show off that these are the houses we are marking that we know you live here, . . . and we are going to burn them down. That's what we thought they were going to do” (interviewee #32, 2008).

This chain of events and the fear of future violence shook the local community enough to motivate certain individuals and organizations to respond positively to the rapid social

transformation of the town. In particular, those who did not want to see such racist brutality because they knew it too well from their not-so-distant history, created a group called Beardstown United. They took a stand and joined immigrants in support of their community's peaceful transformation. I will explore their roles later in the paper.

The 1996 events were important both for catalyzing local and immigrant actors' efforts to negotiate an inclusive city and for influencing the formation of a new racialized local geography. Hence when they started to recruit among West Africans, in the early 2000s, the plant's Human Resources personnel offered the new West African recruits a list of available rentals in Rushville, a town 10 miles from Beardstown. Rushville also had a history as a Sundown town, but African immigrants were steered by the plant to settle there as a measure to reduce risk of renewed upset among native born locals who were still dealing with conflicting reactions to the arrival of Latino families in Beardstown. As one informant indicated, the plant managers did not want to risk another explosion (interviewee #6, 2006).

Steering West Africans to Rushville created a clearly divided residential geography among the plant's labor force. African-Americans working at the plant lived (and continue to live) in larger nearby towns with racially segregated neighborhoods, places like Jacksonville (30 miles away) or Springfield (45 miles away).¹⁵ Latin Americans settled among native-born, white workers in Beardstown; and black West Africans settled in a third location, Rushville. Such a residentially divided workforce has consequences for the interracial relations among immigrant groups by limiting those interactions to the workplace. In the last few years, as West Africans moved to Beardstown, aspects of this division have been challenged, creating more opportunities for interracial interactions outside the workplace. I will discuss this development later in the paper, but note it here by way of offering an overall sense of the past and recent history of the town and of the social and spatial dynamics of change.

4. Research Findings: Profiling the Recruited Labor Force

As noted above, I used both quantitative and qualitative methods in my research. In this section I will first summarize the results of the quantitative survey, then provide two short life stories from the ethnographic work.

The results of our surveys are summarized in Tables 1 and 2 below. The key findings were the following:

- 54% of the French-speaking Africans had some college education as opposed to 14% of the Latinos
- 84% of the Latinos with children had those children with them as opposed to only 33% of the Africans
- 40% of the Latinos owned their homes as opposed to 8% of the African cohort.

A number of factors explain these findings. Some of the differences between the Latinos and West Africans are the result of the Lottery Visa (LV) process through which most West Africans arrived.¹⁶ For example, the LV requires applicants to have a high school diploma. This partially accounts for the higher general education level among Africans. Travel costs further restrict the options for Africans. Visa applications and travel costs add up to about \$4,000 per person, more than six times the annual income of a well-paid civil servant in Togo. In many cases, this made the cost of bringing family members to the U.S. prohibitive, especially young children requiring childcare. By contrast, Latino immigrants had far fewer financial and immigration constraints. Moreover, the differing histories of recent migration for the two groups

are relevant. Many Mexicans in Beardstown are the third generation of immigrants in their families. Thus, they have a stronger network of information and support. West Africans' history of immigration in the U.S. begins fairly recently, resulting in more limited networks and knowledge of techniques of surviving in the U.S. Also, since Africans in Beardstown are often the only member of their family in the U.S., their burden of sending money back home is much greater. These factors combined also help to explain the lower homeownership rate among African immigrants despite the affordability of housing in Beardstown.

Table 1. Summary of housing information for the three language groups in the Beardstown area. Source: Questionnaire surveys 2008.

	Latino Hispanic	African Francophone	Anglo
Rent	44 % (20/45)	88 % (23/26)	8 % (39/468)
OWN	40 % (18/45)	8 % (2/26)	88 % ¹⁷ (413/468)

Table 2. Summary of the results for the additional surveys conducted in the Beardstown area. Source: Questionnaire surveys 2008

	Latino Hispanic	African Francophone
Do you have children? yes	88 % (38/43)	56 % (33/59)
Respondents who have children and have them living in the U.S.	84 % (32/38)	33 % (11/ 33)
Respondents with college education or more	14 % (6/ 43)	54 % 32/59
Respondents with elementary education or less	42 % (18/43)	10 % (6/ 59)
Own house in addition to your residence? yes	30 % (13/43)	25 % (5/20)
Do you think you'll stay in the US? yes	42 % (18/43)	75 % (15/20)
Will you stay in Beardstown? no	39 % (17/43)	45 % (9/20)
Will you stay in Beardstown? Yes	26 % (11/43)	15 % (3/20)
Average number in household	4.4	2.4

Ethnographies: The Stories of Jose and Ellen

To further explore the complexity of immigrants' lives in Beardstown, I share the stories of two immigrants with the pseudonyms of Jose, from Mexico, and Ellen, from Togo. This story begins in the parking lot of the town's Wal-Mart, where I first encountered the multicultural community that constitutes this global village in Illinois.

Jose parks his car and gets out with his three children. He was one of the first Mexican immigrants who came to Beardstown to work at Cargill in the early 1990s. Many among the early wave of Mexican immigrants were recruited by Cargill's mobile recruiters during their trips to towns on both sides of the Mexican border. Jose, however, arrived in Beardstown from California, recruited by word of mouth through his cousin. The cost of living in California was high; in Beardstown, however, not only were living expenses lower, there was also year-round employment at Cargill. So Jose decided to move. The first period was very difficult. As he says, there was no rental housing market. He slept in his car for the first two weeks while working the nightshift. Only then could he manage to raise enough money to pay a deposit on a

rental unit. Now he owns his own house and actually has another house that he rents to other immigrants. Unlike most of the other Mexican immigrants in Beardstown, he has a high school education. He is from a rural town in the state of Michoacán and is a third-generation migrant. His grandfather, the first generation of immigrants in the family, came to the U.S. in the 1920s to build the railroads. His father, an agricultural laborer, arrived in the U.S. in the 1940s as part of the *Braceros* Program.¹⁸ Jose and his siblings are the third generation in his family who have been born and raised in Mexico but have sold their labor in the U.S. Today about 25 members of Jose's extended family live in Beardstown: siblings, their spouses and children. That means that the pressure on him to send remittances is less since he has more family in the U.S. Moreover, one sibling has been able to bring his mother-in-law to Beardstown. She takes care of all the children while all the adults work at Cargill. All of them are now connected with Cargill in one way or another.

As we are talking, on the other side of the parking lot, Ellen arrives. Ellen is in her bright-colored African dress and head dress. She greets Jose in Spanish. Ellen is French-speaking, from Togo, but she Jose greets in Spanish because she's picked up a few words of Spanish through her child care arrangements. Her child is being taken care of by Jose's mother-in-law, a practice becoming common among the immigrants. Ellen arrived with her husband about four years ago, though the first wave of Francophone West Africans had arrived in 2003. She came with a Diversity Visa — what they call “playing lotto” to win a visa. Ellen is highly educated, like most of the other West Africans in this town. She was a teacher in Togo, and her husband was a mechanical engineer. In Beardstown they both “cut meat,” as they call it to mark the demeaning work they do. Their English is limited because they are French-speaking, and they have a huge debt. The high cost of travel meant they had to leave their children back in Togo. Ellen has to send remittances not only for those children, but also for her entire extended family who rely on her because no one else in her family sends remittances home.

The stories of Jose and Ellen reveal their different local and trans-local networks and resources, as well as highlight the differential immigration histories that constitute those networks and resources.

Hence, while there are many parallels between the life patterns of Latinos and West Africans in Beardstown, the differences are significant as well. Bearing this in mind, we now turn to the actions these two grouping have taken to improve the quality of their lives in the Beardstown community.

5. Beyond the Workplace and Formal Politics

Formal Structures of Local Politics

Beardstown has a mayor and a town council that comprises eight members. All are white; seven are male. The council meets twice a month, typically for less than half an hour. Citizens at large rarely attend. The mayor is the obvious kingpin in this structure. According to one local authority “there has never been a time when the council voted down one of the mayor's proposals in council” (interviewee #9, 2007).

However, voting at meetings is not always critical to decision-making in the local authority. In an interview with Mr. Roberts, a member of the sixth generation of a local farming family, he pointed to a coffee table in a local diner and said:

This is the city council, here, right here is where all the town decisions are made every morning sometime between 7:30 and 8:30. First comes Jim and gets his coffee, then comes John and gets his coffee, after them usually come Robert and Tom. By 8 o'clock we have a full council where they discuss what is what and what needs to be done (interviewee #24, 2008).

In other words the formal government operates through its own exclusive informal structures, devoid of any presence of the immigrants.

Despite this exclusion, Beardstown immigrants have achieved a certain degree of inclusion in public institutions and public spaces. They have attained a high rate of home ownership, a multilingual education program, and a strong presence in public space through sports, cultural identity celebrations, and integrated residential neighborhoods.

The first important aspect of the newcomers' achievements is in spatial terms. As mentioned earlier, in the Beardstown area a three-way, divided residential geography emerged among West Africans, Latin Americans and African-Americans. Unlike African-Americans, West Africans, stay in former Sundown towns like Rushville or Beardstown. Moreover, West Africans coming from backgrounds of higher education and social status are often viewed more favorably by the white communities in Rushville and Beardstown than African Americans. Some typical comments are: "they are black, but they are educated;" or "they are different from American blacks, they speak French" (interviewee #26, 2008).

By 2007, following a sharp increase in gas prices, West Africans started moving from Rushville to Beardstown to be closer to their workplace. Their move was also facilitated by a burgeoning rental housing market, many units of which were owned by Mexican immigrants. These Mexican homeowners were mostly people who had arrived in Beardstown more than a decade earlier and had bought and fixed up houses. Another highlight of the survey findings is the high rate of homeownership among Spanish-speaking immigrants. Various circumstances have made this possible. One is the affordability of homeownership in this small town. This point is discussed in detail in Diaz McConnell and Miraftab (2009) but briefly re-stated here, the average house price (\$40,000 to \$50,000) in the early 2000s was affordable for full time workers at the plant, then employed at a starting wage of \$11.65 per hour. A favorable mortgage market in the early 2000s also contributed. The large local and translocal network of Mexican immigrants was also a source of information about the processes and conditions of homeownership. Mexican home ownership opportunities were further enhanced by a sympathetic local Anglo realtor who, after the violent anti-immigrant incidents of 1996, was determined to reach out to immigrants. She signed up for intensive Spanish classes in Springfield and learned Spanish to serve the town's new population and her potential clientele (interviewee #8, 2006 and 2007). All these conditions helped to make the Mexican immigrants in Beardstown into homeowners and later landlords supplying rental units to other immigrants. Today renting across white-non-white and across West African-Latino lines is common among both white and Latino landlords. West Africans and Mexicans reside throughout the community among local residents of European descent.

Unlike big cities that have racially and ethnically segregated neighborhoods that receive new immigrants upon arrival, Beardstown, like most small towns with homogeneous populations, did not have or need to enforce the zoning or other land use regulations that created and institutionalized ethnicized or racialized neighborhoods. Indeed, because of the history as a

sundown town, no internal zoning regulation was needed: non-whites, one might say, were “zoned out” of the entire town. The absence of any pre-existing, residentially segregated spatial structure in town meant that newcomers found houses wherever there was a landlord willing to rent or sell a unit to them. Diaz McConnell and Miraftab (2009), calculating an index of dissimilarity for Beardstown based on the 2000 census, found that immigrants comprised between seven and twenty-seven percent of each of seven block groups over three census tracts within the community’s boundaries.¹⁹ That percentage is lower than the index of dissimilarity found for New York, Los Angeles or Chicago (2009). Today, the diverse immigrant groups live all over Beardstown, or as local residents often put it, “they are everywhere.”

For immigrants in Beardstown, housing has not been the only means of claiming their right to the city and making it a new home. The celebration of Mexican Independence Day in Beardstown (since 1998) and the newly instituted annual celebration of Africa Day in Rushville²⁰ (since 2008) are public events that boldly declare the new immigrants’ right to the town and its public spaces. While the first Africa Day in 2008 was celebrated indoors, the following year the event took place in the town’s public park, starting with a soccer match among West Africans and followed by West African music, dance and food. The celebration of Mexican Independence Day in Beardstown, despite some resentment by locals, has been growing every year with greater and more diverse participation by local residents. The last celebration was marked by 21 floats parading through the town’s streets to the main plaza, where they were greeted by live Mexican music at the plaza’s gazebo and Mexican food stalls circling the plaza. That same plaza in 1996 hosted a 6-foot-tall burning cross and a KKK parade!

One of the main organizers of this annual event explained the sentiments motivating the Mexican Independence Day celebration in the following passage:

“Here is the problem: . . . what are Mexicans known for [in the eyes of average Anglo Americans]? They are known as people that are drunken, uneducated, and illegal. . . Mexicans *trabajan de todo, y comen de todo* [do any kind of work and eat any kind of food] that is the Mexican identity here. And that is what Mexicans want to do with the celebration of cultural identity in this town. . . that they are workers, who are marginalized by everyone and everywhere, they are workers at the bottom of the bottom. But they take pride in their cultural heritage” (interviewee#30, 2008).

Immigrants in Beardstown have also achieved a notable inclusion in public educational institutions, especially the schools and the library. Schools were perhaps the town’s first public institution to feel the impact of immigration. Enrollment of culturally and linguistically diverse students in Beardstown went from 1 in 1993 to 556 in 2006 (30% of all students).²¹ The school response changed from offering English as a Second Language (ESL) to offering a bilingual program. By 2006 the elementary school had managed to adopt the Dual Language Program (DLP). This is a bold plan that aims for integration of different linguistic groups in a school by requiring both language groups to receive half of their instruction in the language not spoken at home. For example, every student from an English-speaking family who participates in this program has to do half of his or her curriculum and homework in Spanish, and vice versa. The school district agreed to adoption of DLP provided that there was parental consent for every participating child. Beardstown teachers then launched what they have called “the teachers’ movement” — a door-to-door campaign to receive 100% consent among both English- and Spanish-speaking parents. The local teachers, some long-standing, native born local and others

new Spanish-speaking, classroom aides joined with the Central American school-community liaison to visit the family of every student in the elementary school and spent the hour or the evening it took to convince them of the value of multicultural education and DLP.

“The whole going house to house took a long time. It was the time to sit down the family to bring to them an important issue that they should reflect on” declared one of the teachers who participated in this process during the summer of 2006 (interviewee #30, 2008). The resistance was not only among English speaking but also among some Spanish speaking families, “. . . within the Hispanic community some have this idea . . . that when their children are going to school they should only be learning English” (ibid.). What motivated the local teachers, they said, was “seeing the school yard tensions amongst students reflecting the classroom segregation between linguistically different student bodies. Something had to be done.” Today Beardstown school is the only rural school district among the 11 districts in Illinois that have adopted DLP. In fact, it is one of the few (335) districts nationwide that have implemented the Dual Language Program (Delany-Barmann and Paciotta 2009).

The DLP’s success has been complemented by the transformation of the local library. Immigrants constitute more than half of the town’s public library’s clientele. The library offers books and staff services in the three main languages spoken in town and by its young school-age users: English, Spanish and French.

Apart from the educational sphere, immigrants have made remarkable inroads in sports and recreation. On a Sunday afternoon, visitors reaching Beardstown on highway 125, encounter a rare scene in the rural Midwest. Weather permitting, racially and linguistically diverse players in colorful outfits fill the town’s public soccer fields. This bold public immigrant presence is the outcome of a long spatial struggle. Interviews with the founders and the players of the soccer league and its eleven multi-racial teams revealed a struggle in which minorities asserted their right to play their sport of choice, not in clandestine fields, but in proper public ones. As one of the interviewees explained, the first immigrants who arrived in Beardstown, almost all Spanish-speaking, used to play in private spaces like the players’ backyards. Even though they tried to be publicly invisible, the interviewee recalled “police cars driving back and forth on the street to check on us, . . . as if we were up to no good” (interviewee #50, 2008). Then for several years they played soccer on abandoned lands around the town and behind the local school. These “fields” were often covered with broken glass and trash. Once they had been kicked out of the field behind the school due to construction, they moved their games to the park district fields, at the time dedicated solely to baseball. But the regular presence of enthusiastic soccer players and their families, and the tireless efforts of the league president in negotiation with the park district officials at last gained them the soccer fields they enjoy today — a legitimate presence in the town’s public space.

The acquisition of access to these fields for their soccer teams is indeed a significant achievement in asserting of immigrants’ right to the city. These public fields are more than recreational. They are new inclusive spaces of interracial, intercultural interaction among the Francophone Africans and the Spanish-speaking Latino immigrants — with increasing numbers of Anglophone residents joining the teams.

While soccer has served as a space for interracial relations among men, child care has fulfilled this function for women. As noted, Mexicans are more likely than West Africans to have children in Beardstown. Often within a larger extended Mexican family there is one young

or old female member who stays home to provide child care for other family members working at Cargill. West African newcomers, as explained earlier, seldom have their extended families with them in the U.S., let alone in Beardstown. They converge with Mexicans, however, around child care, as they find the Mexicans' expression of affection and care towards children more like Africans'. "They are like us," as a West African mother says about her Mexican caregiver.

I also need to stress here the role that some local, native-born residents play as allies of immigrants in this process of social and spatial inclusion. As I mentioned earlier, the violent events of 1996 motivated a number of individuals and organizations to join forces with the immigrants for a peaceful transition to a multicultural and multi-racial community. The Catholic Church instituted weekly services in Spanish and flew in three nuns from Pueblo, Mexico; the Nazarene church brought in a bilingual, U.S. - educated pastor from Jalisco, Mexico; the school hired an El Salvadoran community liaison to facilitate the intercultural relationships at school and between the school and the community. In the early stages of the post- 1996 response, these local agents played an important role in the inclusion of immigrants in public institutions and spaces just described. The nuns worked hard among new arrivals who were struggling with poverty and alienation and living doubled or tripled up in the scarce rental units. The pastor, the priest and the school liaison were important as cultural brokers between the new and the established residents, often writing editorials in the local newspaper to promote a culture of tolerance. The entrepreneurial realtor mentioned earlier helped many Mexican tenants to become owners of their own homes and then owners of rental properties offering more residential options to their fellow new comers. The school teachers who mobilized the door-to-door campaign for DLP served as an army of cultural understanding at the door of every residence that housed an elementary school child.²²

Seeing From Below

To understand transnational processes and their mutual constitution at the global and local levels, we should reflect on vantage point. From the macro structural vantage point as from a bird's-eye view, we note primarily large cities — dubbed global cities (e.g., Sassen 1991; Marcuse and van Kempen 2000). From this perspective the small towns are conceptualized as a series of absences (absence of the urban). They are viewed as in-between spaces rendered as dark holes of nothingness, "left behind by globalization" (Longworth 2008:103). The rural Midwest, if it is not for its large cities or exceptional meat packing towns revived by immigrants, are described as "isolated and out of date, . . . simply withering away" (ibid.).

By grounding the analysis of global capitalism in historically and geographically specific locations and actors, one can see not only the diversity in sites of global capital production, but also the particularities in forms of resistance and action that respond to the specificities of local spaces — in other words "the constraints and opportunities that contextuality imposes" (Guarnizo and Smith 1998: 11). After all, what we notice depends on the point from which we are looking. Seeing from below allows us to take account of a range of interactions and interrelations among diverse populations and hence to understand these relations "beyond the more sensational instances of violence and to concentrate on the more mundane, everyday experiences of new immigrants and established residents" (Lamphere 1992:3).

Global ethnography of emerging transnational spaces like Beardstown, captures a historicized and contextualized understanding of local communities and the transnational practice of immigrants that constitute the global process and forces of immigration and industrial

restructuring. It depicts how immigrant groups draw on and construct distinct local and translocal resources, networks and meanings; and how in a specific, historically constituted space immigrants' varied constraints and resources converge into social dynamics and forms of action that one would otherwise not expect. Analyzing transnationalism from below, can reveal forms of agency that otherwise might escape attention.

The dominant literature on globalization and immigration presents an inadequate analytical lens for understanding the possibilities in emerging transnational spaces like Beardstown. The inadequacy lies not only in their focus on large metropolitan centers as hotbeds of immigration and immigrants' action (e.g. contributors to Gerstle and Mollenkopf 2001) but also in a political bias towards forms of action that are large-scale, collective and confrontational. Such forms of action are more likely to occur in the relatively open political environments of large cities, which offer anonymity to participants.

Bayat (2010) makes an important intervention in this area of scholarship by expanding the debate on forms of resistance and political action beyond collective forms of action and mobilization. He critiques the social movement literature for its bias towards forms of action more likely to occur in liberal democratic structures. Reflecting on the experience of subordinate groups in highly constrained and contested political environments, he highlights the non-collective forms of action and what he calls the "quiet encroachment of the ordinary."²³ He discusses the struggles by youth, women, and informal traders in Tehran or Cairo whose gains are achieved not through large, media-attracting marches or protests (which indeed will be doomed to instant repression), but are won rather through un-assuming forms of resistance and under-the-radar politics that are potent but performed quietly and unnoticed. He calls such actions the "art of presence"—the courage and creativity to assert collective will in spite of all odds, to circumvent constraints, utilizing what is available and discovering new spaces within which to make oneself heard, seen, felt, and realized" (2010:26). The scholars of popular politics stress the potent force of presence by minoritized and unwanted populations in spaces where they are not wanted. Feminist scholars, for example, have stressed in particular the need for such stubborn presence by women in formal politics, coining the term "politics of presence" (Phillips 1995).

Key to the Beardstown story is the immigrants' persistent creation of a public presence in this former sundown town. Clearly the celebrations of Mexican Independence Day and Africa Day as well as the creation and use of open soccer fields for Sunday soccer games constitute more than mere recreational activities. They constitute an assertion of the immigrant's right to the city, the right to be there. For Beardstown, the consideration of its history as a former sundown town is critical as well. In such a context the mere presence of immigrants and "others" in previously prohibited spaces counts as an important political achievement. Their non-white bodies and non-English speech in Beardstown's public spaces from the plaza to the streets to the sports field to the churches, schools and libraries represent crucial political gains.

The working of such "art of presence" is seen in stories that all residents share about Mexicans being everywhere, not only in every block of the town as neighbors, but also in every classroom of their children, in the library and grocery stores, and at the barbeque stand you can find on lazy Sunday afternoons. Resistance to being criminalized or made invisible fuels this appropriation of local space.

6. Conclusion

To conclude I return to the central question of this paper: the importance of locality for the immigrant's experiences. Locality and the varied resources, networks and racialized histories of local actors situated in a specific space do make a difference in the experience of immigrants and their transnational practices. While these are often theorized in terms of the experience of immigrants in large metropolitan centers and the traditional destinations of immigrants, we need to systematically examine small towns and non-traditional destinations to recognize the specificities and generalizabilities that surface in terms of immigrants' experiences in these emerging transnational spaces.

We can recognize these, however, only if we look from below and ground our understanding ethnographically in the everyday practices of people and their unassuming forms of action to claim a dignified life. Misunderstood and measured against the theorized actions that occur in metropolitan centers or within more open, liberal democratic structures and processes, the emerging transnational spaces of the heartland can be portrayed solely as spaces of despair and victimization of newcomers. But studying them in their own right we can register the alternative forms of agency that immigrants and their local allies construct. We can see the invented spaces of citizenship through which immigrants achieve substantive citizenship not through, but despite their formal legal status.

Certain aspects of Beardstown as a small and affordable town without pre-existing zoning regulations were important in facilitating the multicultural and multiracial spatial integration that we see today. The fact that immigrants in a short time were able to become homeowners and landlords strengthened the possibilities for such diverse populations to live side by side. School integration might not have moved forward if Beardstown, like metropolitan centers, had several schools for each grade and parents had been able to simply move their child to an English-only school. These are aspects of a small town that indeed offer opportunities for inclusive spatial integration. We must examine small towns on their own terms, as they are intensely complex and contradictory in the opportunities and constraints they present: bearing exploitation, resentment and inter-cultural clashes; and yet simultaneously facilitating solidarity, inter-racial interactions, and resistance — resistance to being dehumanized and undignified.

This is not to ignore the harsh conditions under which immigrant workers and their families in these small company towns sell and socially reproduce their labor force. That would be a poignant subject of another essay. Nor is it to romanticize a harmonious collaborative relationship among different cultural and racial groups in this town. To the contrary, the complex and contradictory processes that are at work in this intensely transnational space are unstable. They could lead to outcomes on either end of the social spectrum: from solidarity to violence.

From a policy perspective, it is important to look at the settlement experiences of immigrants in small U.S. towns because they reveal the range of spaces that are most effectively used by residents to shape their new homes in this country. The implication of the insights presented in this essay is that every day spaces that mediate inter-racial relations outside the production floor play a significant role in renegotiating the relationships that the corporations promote in the plant through creation of a segmented labor market. It is a grave mistake and a missed opportunity if practitioners, policy makers, authorities and non-profit organizers, labor and immigrant right activists and advocates overlook the possibilities that everyday spaces of interaction outside the workplace offer. Planners aspiring to creation of a better, that is socially more tolerant, world have a few things to learn from the experience of Beardstown where people

were the most effective planners for the town's social development. Researchers and policy makers stepping beyond the metropolitan ivory towers and shedding their urban prejudice can also earn important insights on the role of informal everyday spaces of interaction among residents such as the school, parks, libraries and sports in shaping of the social and public spaces. Here public policy is in the making not through formal officials' decrees or large organized movements but by creative and complex webs of small everyday actions that combined open up civic spaces and shape new policies as practiced.

In short, this study calls for broadening our understandings of transnational spatialities to include the non-traditional destinations of immigrants; small, emerging multicultural towns; and non-collective actions and interracial solidarities renegotiated outside the workplace — through the persistent but quiet art of presence.

Acknowledgements:

I am grateful to the residents of Beardstown for sharing their stories, to numerous research assistants for helping out in various ways with the project, to anonymous reviewers for suggestions on the manuscript improvement, to Nancy Abelmann, Rachel Schurmann, David Wilson, Stacy Harwood, Jim Kilgore and Ken Salo for insightful comments on the project. The shortcomings of the paper, however, remain with the author. I also acknowledge generous support in kind and funding by the Center for Democracy in a Multiracial Society, and the Research Board at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign.

References:

- Bayat, Asef 2010. *Life as Politics: How Ordinary People Change the Middle East* Palo Alto: Stanford University Press.
- Bonacich, Edna 1972. "A Theory of Ethnic Antagonism: The Split Labor Market". *American Sociological Review* 37 (5): 547–559.
- Broadway, Michael 1995. "From City to Countryside: Recent Changes in the Structure and Location of the Meat- and Fish-Processing Industries" in Donald Stull, Michael Broadway, and David Griffith (ed.) *Any Way You Cut It: Meat Processing and Small-Town America*. Kansas: University Press of Kansas. Pp. 17-40.
- Delany-Barmann, Gloria and Carla Paciotto 2009. "Educational Reform in a Midwestern Elementary School: a Teacher Movement for Interethnic Integration." Presentation made at the Illinois, Immigration and Race symposium, CDMS, UIUC.)
- Diaz McConnell, Eileen and Faranak Miraftab 2009. "Sundown Town to 'Mexican Town': Newcomers, Old Timers, and Housing in Small Town America," *Rural Sociology* 74 (4): 605-629.
- Durand, Jorge, Douglas Massey and Chiara Capoferro 2005. "The New Geography of Mexican Immigration" in Victor Zúñiga and Rubén Hernández-León (ed.) *New Destinations: Mexican Immigration in the United States*, pp 1-20. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.
- Edwards, Richard 1973. "The Labor Process" in Richard Edwards, Michael Reich, David M Gordon (eds) *Labor Market Segmentation*. Lexington, Mass: DC Heath.
- Erickson, Ken 1990. "New Immigrants and the Social Service Agency: Changing Relations at SRS." *Urban Anthropology* 19(4): 321-344.

- Farley, John E. 2005(6th edition, first edition 1982). *Majority-Minority Relations*. New York: Prentice Hall.
- Fink, Deborah 1998. *Cutting Into the Meatpacking Line: Workers and Change in the Rural Midwest*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.
- Gerstle, Gary and John Mollenkopf (eds.) 2001. *E Pluribus Unum? Contemporary and Historical Perspectives on Immigrant Political Incorporation*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.
- Gouveia, Lourdes and Donald Stull 1995 “Dances with Cows: Beef Packing’s Impact on Garden City, Kansas, and Lexington, Nebraska” in Donald Stull, Michael Broadway, and David Griffith (ed.) *Any Way You Cut It: Meat Processing and Small-Town America*. Kansas: University Press of Kansas. Pp85-107.
- Grey, Mark and Anne Woodrick 2005. “Latinos Have Revitalized Our Community: Mexican Migration and Anglo Responses in Marshalltown, Iowa.” In Victor Zúñiga and Rubén Hernández-León, eds., *New Destinations: Mexican Immigration in the United States*. NY: Russell Sage Foundation, pp. 133-154.
- Grey, Mark 1995 “Pork, Poultry, and Newcomers in Storm Lake, Iowa” in Donald Stull, Michael Broadway, and David Griffith (ed.) *Any Way You Cut It: Meat Processing and Small-Town America*. Kansas: University Press of Kansas. Pp 109-128.
- Griffith, David 1995a. New Immigrants in an Old Industry: Blue Crab Processing in Palmico County, North Carolina” in Donald Stull, Michael Broadway, and David Griffith (ed.) *Any Way You Cut It: Meat Processing and Small-Town America*. Kansas: University Press of Kansas. Pp. 153-186.
- Griffith, David, Michael Broadway and Donald Stull 1995. “Introduction: Making Meat” in Donald Stull, Michael Broadway, and David Griffith (ed.) *Any Way You Cut It: Meat Processing and Small-Town America*. Kansas: University Press of Kansas. Pp. 1-15.
- Guarnizo, Luis and Michael Peter Smith 1998. “The Locations of Transnationalism” in Michael Peter Smith and Luis Guarnizo (eds.) *Transnationalism From Below*. New Brunswick, London: Transaction Publishers: Pp.3-34.
- Guzmán, B. and E. D. McConnell 2002. "The Hispanic population: 1990-2000 growth and change." *Population Research and Policy Review* 21(1-2): 109-128.
- Hakenberg and Kokulka 1995 “Industries, Immigrants, and Illness in the New Midwest” in Donald Stull, Michael Broadway, and David Griffith (ed.) *Any Way You Cut It: Meat Processing and Small-Town America*. Kansas: University Press of Kansas. Pp. 187-211.
- Illinois Star Daily*. 1985. “For new business and industry, mayor says ‘I’d negotiate with the devil’.” May 14, 1985. Front page.
- Illinois Star Daily*. 1986a. “Keep cool and align” editorial, October 1 1986.
- Illinois Star Daily*. 1986b. “The efforts begin to solve OM closing” by Cathy West, October 3, 1986.
- Illinois Star Daily*. 1986c. “Walters: main goal to find a new employer” by Cathy West, October 3, 1986.
- Illinois Star Daily*. 1986d. “Living on ‘borrowed time’” by Dale Barker, October 3, 1986.
- Illinois Star Daily*. 1986e. “Officials optimistic about OM sale” by Cathy West, October 4, 1986.
- Illinois Star Daily*. 1986f. “Mayor Walters: ‘go forward and not stop’ October 4, 1986.
- Illinois Star Daily*. 1986g. “Cooperation is key to easing the effects of an Oscar Mayer closing” by Cathy West, October 9, 1986.

- Kandel, W. and J. Cromartie 2004. *New Patterns of Hispanic Settlement in Rural America*. E. R. Service.
- Kandel, William and Emilio Parrado 2005. "Restructuring of the US Meat Processing Industry and New Hispanic Migrant Destination." *Population and Development Review* 31(3): 447-471.
- Lamphere Louise (ed.) 1992. "Introduction" in Louise Lamphere, *Structuring Diversity: Ethnographic Perspectives on the New Immigration*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. pp.1-34
- Lichter, D. T. and K. M. Johnson 2006. "Emerging Rural Settlement Patterns and the Geographic Redistribution of America's New Immigrants." *Rural Sociology* 71(1): 109–131.
- Loewen, James 2006. *Sundown Towns: A Hidden Dimension of American Racism*. New York: Touchstone.
- Lombela, Wembo 2008. "Transnational African Immigrants' Resettlement through the Diversity Visa Lottery." Unpublished paper. University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.
- Longworth, Richard 2008. *Caught in the Middle: America's Heartland in the Age of Globalism*. New York: Bloomsbury.
- Marcuse, Peter and Ronald van Kempen (eds). 2000. *Globalizing Cities: a New Spatial Order?* Malden, Mass.: Blackwell.
- Millard, Ann, Jorge Chapas and Ken Crane 2004. "E Pluribus Unum? Discussion. Conclusions, and Policy Implications" in Millard, A. V. and Jorge Chapa, (eds). *Apple Pie and Enchiladas: Latino Newcomers in the Rural Midwest*. Austin: University of Texas Press. pp. 204-221.
- Miraftab, Faranak. Forthcoming. "Global Restructuring of Social Reproduction in the U.S. Heartland: Insights for Planning Education and Scholarship." *Journal of Planning Education and Research*.
- Miraftab, Faranak. 2009. "Rapid Racial and Cultural Change in Two Former Sundown Towns." *Sundown Town Newsletter* no.3: 1-7.
- Miraftab, Faranak and Eileen Diaz McConnell. 2008. "Multiculturalizing Rural Towns: Insights for Inclusive Planning." *International Planning Studies* 13(4): 343-360.
- Phillips, Anne 1995. *The Politics of Presence*. Oxford; New York: Clarendon Press.
- Sassen, Saskia 1991. *The Global City: New York, London, Tokyo*. N.J.: Princeton University Press.
- Stull, Donald 1990. "'I Come to the Garden': Changing Ethnic Relations in Garden City, Kansas." *Urban Anthropology* 1(4): 303-320.
- The State Journal-Register*. 1987. "Hog-slaughtering plant reopens in Beardstown" by Anthony Hebron. June 28, 1987.
- Zúñiga, Victor and Rubén Hernández-León 2005. "Introduction" in Victor Zúñiga and Rubén Hernández-León (ed.) *New Destinations: Mexican Immigration in the United States*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.



Aerial photo of Beardstown, Illinois.



Mexican Independence Day Celebration, Sept 2008.
(Photo by author)



Africa Day Celebration, August 2009.
(Photo by author)

Endnotes

¹ See footnote 1 for 2010 data.

² See Fink 1998:136 reflecting on almost all studies contributing to edited volumes by Lamphere (1992) and by Stull, et al. (1995).

³ The 2006 field work for this project was conducted with the support of the Center for Democracy in A Multiracial Society at the University of Illinois Urbana Champaign and in collaboration with Eileen Diaz McConnell as reflected in our joint publications in 2008 and 2009.

⁴ Interviews were conducted at the place of choice of interviewees. Public officials, members of civic association and staff at public institutions were interviewed at their workplace. Most immigrant residents chose to be interviewed at home. Some local native- born residents were first approached in public spaces. For example, the serving counter of the Star Café in Beardstown where strategically I had my morning coffees proved an excellent space for exploratory conversations that then led to formal interviews to be set up in different locations including residents' homes. Interviews varied in length from one to two and a half hours. Those that reached two-and-a-half hours often involved second, or in some cases, a third visit/interview. Interviews were tape recorded when respondents consented. All names used in this paper are pseudonyms.

⁵ Of the interviewed immigrants 21 were male and 16 were female.

⁶ We used the post office database and based on last names of residents we chose the language in which we sent out the survey.

⁷ These included an additional 43 surveys conducted among Spanish- speaking immigrants and 39 surveys conducted among French speaking immigrants. The Surveys were conducted by immigrants who had a greater involvement with their community as active members of the school system or local churches. The 39 surveys conducted among French-speaking immigrants were carried out by a West African immigrant who served as an Americore volunteer in Rushville and Beardstown.

⁸ One focus group session was conducted in ESL classes held in Rushville (March 31, 2008, morning class, Spoon River Community College), and two in Beardstown (April 24 and the morning class and Friday April 25, 2008 evening class, Lincoln Land Community College). Participants in the Rushville class were all French speaking. The other two focus groups/classes were composed of both French and Spanish speaking participants. There was an average of 8-10 participants in each focus group.

⁹ For analysis of information obtained in Togo and Mexico in respect to the trans-local practices of Beardstown immigrants see Miraftab forthcoming in *Journal of Planning Education and Research*.

¹⁰ In 1890 the town was all white, from 1900 to 1980 in each census cycle one black person is recorded, which seems to be the black cook the respondents referred to (for detailed demographic data see Miraftab 2009).

¹¹ In the local newspaper's editorial pieces titled "Keep cool and align" the reaction to news of OM closure is described as "waves of disbelief shocked Beardstown, Cass County and the state itself. . . . the OM announcement was unexpected and un-nerving. Just three years ago we successfully fought and reveled in our success when intervention by government and business leaders helped bring about ratification of a new OM contract. Perhaps we rested on our laurels too long" (*Illinois Sate Daily* 1986a). Headlines of Beardstown newspaper *Illinois Star Daily* for the 1985 and 1986 period reflect this anxiety. Some examples include "efforts to solve OM closing" (October 3, 1986b); "[mayor's] main goal to find a new employer" (October 3, 1986c); "Living on 'borrowed time'" (October 3, 1986d); "Officials optimistic about OM sale" (October 4, 1986e); "mayor Walters: 'go forward and not stop'" (October 4, 1986f); and "Cooperation is key to easing the effects of an Oscar Mayer closing" (October 9, 1986g).

¹² Through the Jobs Training Partnership Act (JTPA) the state offered additional incentives to potential buyers of OM facility. In July of 1987 the consortium that was to help Cargill for retraining of displaced workers received a \$215,000 grant (*The State Journal-Register* June 28, 1987).

¹³ Network recruiting is documented in various studies of immigrant labor force recruitment for meat packing industry. For a similar case see Grey 1995.

¹⁴ Data constructed from Local employment Dynamics in Census Bureau, <http://lehd.did.census.gov/led/datatools/qwiapp.html>

¹⁵ To date very few African Americans reside in Beardstown. The area's sundown town history, a factor that does not feature in residential decisions of West Africans, persists in the collective memory of African Americans. Hence African American workers at the Beardstown plant continue to live in other towns and commute to their workplace. As the focus of the present research has been on the inter-racial dynamics in Beardstown outside the workplace I recognize omission of African Americans in my analysis. This is an important question that I seek to answer in my future research and would need focus on workplace in Beardstown.

¹⁶ Under Section 131 of the Immigration Act of 1990 that amended the terms of Section 203(c) of the Immigration and Nationality Act, a new class of immigrants known as "diversity immigrants" (DV immigrants) was created, and the Act makes available 50,000 permanent resident visas annually to persons from countries with low rates of immigration to the United States. However the inauguration of the diversity visa lottery (D.V lottery) took place in 1995. According to Section 131 of the Immigration Act of 1990, the diversity visa program is aimed at increasing diversity in the U.S. This objective is achieved by encouraging immigration from countries, which the department of state has shown over the last five years have had low immigration to the U.S. (Department of State)." (Lombela 2008:5).

¹⁷ Percentage of U.S. population who are homeowners: 68.8%. Percentage of Latinos in the U.S. who are homeowners: 49.7% (census 2000).

¹⁸ The *Bracero* program was a guest workers agreement between the governments of the US and Mexico which recruited Mexican workers into the US predominantly for agricultural work in exchange for a payment to the Mexican state per laborer. In the period of its operation between 1942 and 1964 more than some 4.6 million Mexicans were admitted to do farm work (*Rural Migration News* January 2002 Volume 8 Number 1).

¹⁹ Block groups are statistical aggregations of a lower geographic unit categorized by the Census Bureau, the census block. Nearly 400 census blocks cover Beardstown's place boundaries in 2000 (this calculation is cited from Diaz McConnell and Miraftab 2009).

²⁰ Africa Day has been celebrated in Rushville because that is where most of the area's Africans used to live when these celebrations were initiated. In addition Rushville, despite its sundown town history, at present has a supportive mayor who has been at the forefront of promoting integration and appreciation of the cultural diversity West Africans have brought to town.

²¹ Pre-K to grade 12 Culturally and Linguistically Diverse students, (CLD) are as follows. 1993 =1; 1994 = 5; 1997= 85; 2000 = 290; 2006 = 552. In 2006 School District's total number of students = 1,376; School District's total free and reduced lunch students = 79%; CLD students as percentage of all students = 30%; CLD students as percentage of kindergartners = 45%.

²² The above observations in library, school and park districts as well as the role of some supportive whites are by no means meant to ignore the underlying larger social hierarchies that persist through these public and formal institutions. White, native-born English-speaking administrators still occupy the top administrative positions in all fields and institutions. Nevertheless, considering the recent multilingual and multi-racial history of the town, the limited openings achieved provide significant mediating spaces across immigrant groups and among immigrants and native born populations specially children.

²³ Bayat defines "quiet encroachment of the ordinary as pertinent to examining the activism of the marginalized groups . . . [referring] to non-collective but prolonged direct actions of dispersed individuals and families to acquire the basic necessities of their lives . . . in a quiet and unassuming illegal fashion" (2010:45).