

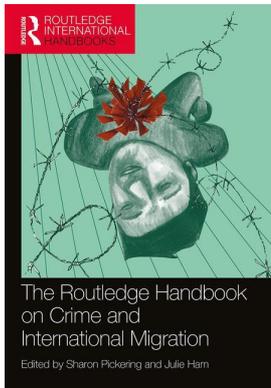
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# Understanding immigration, crime and victimization in the United States

## Patterns and paradoxes in traditional and new destination sites

*Marjorie S. Zatz and Hilary Smith*

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### Introduction

Immigration and crime have been intertwined in political and public discourse in the United States almost since the founding of the country, with fears of crime by one wave of immigrants quickly replaced by suspicions about the next. At the turn of the twentieth century, immigrants made up about 13–15 percent of the US population (Britz and Batalova 2013). Fear of crime by immigrants was closely entangled even then with race, culture, gender, and religion – sometimes explicitly, as in the *Chinese Exclusion Act* of 1882 and the *Quota Laws* of 1921 and 1924, and sometimes more implicitly (Calavita 1984, 2000; Ngai 2004; Gardner 2005).

This chapter surveys the extant literature on immigration, crime and victimization in the United States. As we discuss, research has repeatedly shown that immigration is associated with a decrease in crime. We then explore the context and conditions under which this crime reduction occurs, with particular attention to whether and how the relationship between immigration and crime varies across traditional and new destination sites. We turn next to the flipside of immigration and crime, considering the relationship between immigration and victimization and how this relationship may be patterned across new and traditional destination sites. Finally, we consider how the moral panic about immigration and crime has contributed to a surge in state and local anti-immigrant laws and ordinances, especially in new destination sites, thus exacerbating the vulnerability of immigrants to exploitation and victimization.

### Early research on immigration and crime

Early research exploring the relationship between immigration, ethnicity, and crime was grounded primarily in social disorganization theory, a perspective drawn from the Chicago School of sociology. Shaw and McKay (1942), Thomas and Znaniecki ([1918] 1958), and others associated with the Chicago School observed that immigrants initially settled in impoverished

neighborhoods. These pioneering studies focused attention on the structural characteristics of neighborhoods, observing that high levels of economic disadvantage, residential instability, and heterogeneity were associated with weakened social ties and diminished informal social control mechanisms, resulting in greater social disorder and crime. As immigrants assimilated and integrated into the larger labor market, they moved to less disorganized and disadvantaged areas, making room for the next wave of immigrants to settle in their old neighborhoods.

In contrast to the linkages between immigration and crime proposed by the Chicago School, government-sponsored investigations such as the 1911 (Dillingham) Immigration Commission and the 1931 (Wickersham) National Commission on Law Observance and Enforcement found lower levels of criminal involvement among the foreign-born (see Kubrin and Ishizawa 2012; Wang 2012). In part, these divergent findings reflect differences in what was being studied: crime rates in impoverished urban neighborhoods, or arrest and incarceration rates for foreign-born and native-born offenders.

Immigration slowed in the mid-1900s, and the percentage of the population that was foreign-born dropped to approximately 5 percent between 1930 and 1970. It then rose sharply, reaching 13 percent of the total population in 2011. The vast majority of the new immigrants came from Latin America and Asia, with almost one-third (29 percent) arriving from Mexico (Britz and Batalova 2013).

With this reshaping of the US population, fear of crime by immigrants re-emerged as a powerful political theme, and again race and culture figured prominently in the popular discourse about immigration and crime. As Provine and Doty remind us, there is a 'mutually reinforcing relationship between racialization and criminalization' (2011: 265; see also Mears 2001; Hagan, Levi and Dinovitzer 2008; Newton 2008; Kubrin, Zatz and Martínez 2012). Demonizing Latinos as criminals is not new in the Southwest (Mirandé 1987; Gómez 2007), where fears of violence at the hands of Mexican immigrants – whether or not based on any reality – play into what Chavez has called the 'Latino Threat Narrative'. This narrative is 'part of a grand tradition of alarmist discourse about immigrants and their perceived negative impacts on society' (Chavez 2008: 3). In response, there has been renewed scholarly interest in the immigration–crime nexus over the past two decades.

### **Immigration and crime: patterns and paradoxes**

Contrary to what Hagan and Palloni termed the popular 'mythology' (1999: 630) linking immigration and crime, research conducted in different parts of the country and using diverse methodologies overwhelmingly finds either no relationship between immigration and crime, or that crime rates decrease in areas of high immigrant concentration. These findings hold in both cross-sectional and longitudinal studies, and regardless of whether the researchers focus on crime rates or incarceration rates (see, for example, Butcher and Piehl 1998; Hagan and Palloni 1999; Martínez 2002; Lee 2003; Sampson, Morenoff and Raudenbush 2005; Rumbaut and Ewing 2007; Stowell 2007; Martínez, Stowell and Cancino 2008; Lee and Martínez 2009; Ousey and Kubrin 2009; Stowell et al. 2009; MacDonald and Saunders 2012; Vélez and Lyons 2012).

Some of the most influential research debunking the immigration–crime nexus took place in Chicago – the same city in which urban sociologists had proposed social disorganization theory to explain the purported relationship between immigration and crime almost a century earlier. Some of this new research supports more sophisticated versions of social disorganization theory, while other findings refute the theory. For instance, in seeking to understand the reduction in crime rates evidenced in many US cities, Robert Sampson and his colleagues examined violent crime in 180 Chicago neighborhoods, finding that immigrant concentration was directly

correlated with lower rates of violence (Sampson, Raudenbush and Earls 1997; Sampson 2008). Sampson suggests that the 'Latino paradox' explains this unexpected effect. That is, Latinos do better on a range of social indicators, from mortality rates to crime rates, than would be expected given their levels of socio-economic disadvantage. This protective function of immigration has now been confirmed in dozens of studies (e.g., Hagan and Palloni 1999; Lee 2003; Stowell 2007; Hagan, Levi and Dinovitzer 2008; Sampson 2008; Desmond and Kubrin 2009; Lee and Martínez 2009; Kubrin and Ousey 2009; Ousey and Kubrin 2009; Davies and Fagan 2012; Vélez and Lyons 2012).

## Disentangling the threads

Recent research has sought to further disentangle the complex relations between immigration, social capital, informal and formal social control, and crime and victimization, and some scholars are returning to social disorganization and other ecological theories to better specify the conditions and contexts in which immigration protects against crime. Borrowing from Kubrin and Ishizawa (2012) who argue that 'context matters', we must consider not just whether, but *how* it matters. For example, Kubrin and Ishizawa suggest that divergent findings may be due to varying levels of social deprivation in the larger community context within which immigrant neighborhoods are situated. Other scholars are exploring whether the same patterns hold in traditional and new destination sites, as the strength of social support systems differs markedly in these divergent settings. Still others are examining differences between first- and second-generation immigrants, variation in the extent to which communities have favorable political climates for immigrants, and divergent patterns that may be based on country of origin and immigrants' experiences in their home country (e.g., DiPietro and Bursik 2012; Lyons, Vélez and Santoro 2013).

A number of theories have been proposed to explain these patterns, and they add texture and nuance to our understanding of the relationship between immigration, crime and victimization. One such theory is 'immigrant revitalization' (Lee and Martínez 2009). In contrast to social disorganization theory, this thesis posits that the steady stream of new immigrants from the same sending communities replenishes and revitalizes traditional religious and cultural values, strengthens familial and other social ties, and infuses informal social control more generally. Employment prospects also tend to be better in traditional destination sites, where established ethnic enclaves offer newcomers resources, support networks and opportunities to find work. As a result, traditional immigrant destination sites are characterized by lower crime rates, especially for violent crime (Martínez and Lee 2000; Martínez and Valenzuela 2006; Martínez, Stowell and Cancino 2008; Sampson 2008; Lee and Martínez 2009; Martínez and Stowell 2012; Harris and Feldmeyer 2013).

Immigrant selection and segmented assimilation have also been proposed as reasons to explain differences across generations. Immigration is not easy, especially for undocumented persons. Economic opportunities are often the primary incentive for immigration, and first-generation immigrants may be especially motivated to work hard and save money to remit home and pay for family members to join them. This, in turn, further strengthens their stake in conformity and in avoiding situations that could result in deportation (Stowell et al. 2009; Kubrin and Ishizawa 2012). In contrast to first-generation immigrants, who are typically buffered from crime due to the traditions and values they carry with them as they migrate, second- and third-generation immigrants tend to have assimilated more, and to be influenced as much by their American peers as by their parents' values (DiPietro and Bursik 2012; Bersani, Loughran and Piquero forthcoming).

*Traditional and new destination sites and immigrant concentration*

One of the most important patterns emerging from recent research is the difference between traditional and new destination sites. California, Florida, Illinois, New Jersey, New York, and Texas have been the primary destinations for new immigrants for decades. Such traditional destinations often have a well-developed infrastructure in place to help new immigrants get settled. They offer social networks, support services and assistance through churches and other institutions, economic resources, and a 'safe haven' (Shihadeh and Barranco, 2013: 82). Yet while many immigrants still seek out traditional gateways, others are starting to favor non-traditional destinations. That is, the presence of immigrants has increased markedly in Southeastern states, such as Georgia, North Carolina, Virginia, and Alabama, as well as in parts of the Midwest, Northeast, and Western states including Arizona, Nevada and Utah (Massey 2008; Passell and Cohn 2009). The shift from traditional gateways has been influenced largely by the availability of jobs in the new locales, at the same time that traditional sites have experienced reduced employment opportunities and stagnant economic growth (Harris and Feldmeyer 2013).

As Varsanyi notes, these new settlement patterns have 'brought the phenomenon of immigration—particularly undocumented immigration—to cities and states that have never before grappled to any significant extent with the challenges and costs—both real and perceived—of large-scale immigrant settlement' (2010a: 10). Accordingly, some scholars are exploring whether the protective effects of immigration on crime found in traditional destination sites are also apparent in these new locales, or whether the weaker economic, cultural, and social supports for immigrants in these settings erode the positive aspects of immigration on community life.

Vélez and Lyons (2012) analyzed neighborhood-level data from 69 U.S. cities during the period 1999–2001 to explore variation in the relationship between immigration and violent crime in traditional and new destination sites. They find that the neighborhood revitalization that protects immigrant communities from crime is strongest in traditional gateway cities, while there is no significant relationship between immigration and crime in neighborhoods located in new destination sites. Vélez and Lyons suggest that this may reflect the smaller concentration of immigrants in new settlement sites, such that they are not able to create a strong infrastructure of ethnic enclaves and immigrant-serving institutions.

Having previously found a negative relationship between immigration and homicide in economically disadvantaged neighborhoods but not in more affluent Chicago neighborhoods (Vélez 2009), Vélez and Lyons (2012) also examine whether neighborhood disadvantage conditions the effects of immigration. They find that the protective effect of immigration on violent crime is greater in economically disadvantaged neighborhoods than in wealthier neighborhoods, perhaps due in part to the higher concentrations of recent immigrants in poorer neighborhoods. While immigrant concentration does not map perfectly onto traditional and new destination sites, there are similar indicators, as immigrant concentration is strongest in traditional sites that have been receiving immigrants for years and weaker in new sites with fewer immigrants. Vélez and Lyons conclude that new immigrants reinvigorate local communities, resulting in 'an infusion of social control and reductions in crime' (ibid.: 237). In contrast, the small number of immigrants in wealthier neighborhoods may isolate them from cultural and social support systems that reduce crime.

Lyons, Vélez and Santoro (2013) take this research a step further in their analysis of immigrant concentration and neighborhood violence in 87 large cities. Using data from the National Neighborhood Crime Study, they report that the inverse relationship between immigrant concentration and violent crime is especially evident in cities characterized by pro-immigrant

legislation and minority political incorporation into elected offices. Such cities, they suggest, enhance social organization and formal and informal social control by building trust within immigrant communities.

Likewise, Kubrin and Ishizawa (2012), Ousey and Kubrin (2009), Shihadeh and Barranco (2013), Harris and Feldmeyer (2013) and MacDonald et al. (2013) find that Latino violent crime rates are substantially lower in traditional destination sites and locales with large immigrant concentrations, while in new destination sites and locales with low immigrant concentrations, the effects are weaker, nonsignificant or weakly positive. These findings hold whether it is official crime data that is analyzed or school-based surveys of youth, as evidenced by Desmond and Kubrin's (2009) findings that immigrant concentration reduces adolescent violence. As a set, these authors suggest that protective factors such as strong family ties, close religious and other traditional networks, and a variety of informal and institutional social control mechanisms reduce crime in traditional destination sites.

Stansfield et al. (2013) add an important nuance to these patterns. While most studies have looked at violent crime, Stansfield and his colleagues examined serious property crime in new and emergent gateway cities, finding no association between recent immigration and major property crimes in new locales.

Drawing from a modification of social disorganization theory, Kubrin and Ishizawa (2012) suggest that divergent findings between Chicago and Los Angeles neighborhoods may be due to contextual differences in the larger communities within which these neighborhoods are located. Both Chicago and Los Angeles are traditional destination sites, but immigrant neighborhoods in Chicago are characterized by lower rates of crime than those in Los Angeles. They suggest that differences may be due to variation in the degree of ethnic diversity within immigrant communities, rates of residential turnover, immigrant generational status and differences in structural conditions in the cities studied.

### *Generational status*

Another strong and consistent finding in the literature on immigration and crime in the United States concerns the effect of generational status. Whether explained by immigrant selection – that is, the factors that distinguish individuals who pull up stakes and move to a new country in search of better opportunities – in the first generation, by processes of assimilation or other factors, the protective effects of immigration diminish across generations.

Bersani, Loughran and Piquero (forthcoming), for example, analyze longitudinal data from the Pathways to Desistance study, finding that first-generation immigrants are less likely to engage in serious offenses. Moreover, first-generation immigrants who have offended move towards desistance more quickly than native-born or second-generation peers, and persistent offending is most pronounced among youth who live in disadvantaged contexts and who exhibit high levels of assimilation. Stansfield (2012) reports similar findings, with immigrant youth significantly less likely to steal from a retail store than nonimmigrant youth. And, the probability of engaging in theft increases with level of assimilation and a concomitant decrease in protective factors such as supportive parenting and a structured home environment.

### *National origin, race and ethnicity*

The influence of generational status may vary depending on the immigrant's race/ethnicity and country of origin. DiPietro and Bursik (2012) compared Cuban, Dominican, Colombian and Nicaraguan youth, using data from the national Children of Immigrants Longitudinal Study.

This is an interesting set of groups to compare, as substantial numbers of immigrants from each of these countries fled to the US for political as well as economic reasons. Their experiences of reception by the US government, local schools and the general public were quite different however. DiPietro and Bursik found that the generational effects differed depending upon the youths' race and national origin, with first-generation Dominican, Colombian and Nicaraguan youth more likely to engage in fighting behavior than their second-generation counterparts, while the reverse was true for the Cuban youth. They conclude, 'the oft-cited finding that second-generation youth engage in more problem behaviors than their first-generation counterparts may hinge on the national origin of the group being studied' (ibid.: 264). Moreover, 'these differences were obscured in estimates for the group as a whole, suggesting that the composition of "Hispanic" samples may obfuscate group differences in the association of nativity with crime and delinquency' (ibid.: 264).

Davies and Fagan (2012) also found variation in immigrants' experiences in New York City, depending in part on race and ethnicity. Most immigrants, they report, settle in areas 'where people look like them and have similar resources' (ibid.: 111). Most of the White immigrants in New York City are from Russia and Eastern Europe, and they tend to settle in areas where they are the predominant racial group. These areas are characterized by low crime rates and good access to resources. In contrast, Black immigrants, most of whom emigrated from Africa and the Caribbean, settle in neighborhoods marked by greater economic deprivation. These neighborhoods have the highest rates of homicide and assault. Latinos and Asians fall in between. Latino immigrants tend to live in majority-Latino neighborhoods that are less economically isolated than those in which Black immigrants have settled. Asian immigrants, interestingly, typically move into predominantly White neighborhoods, which, Davies and Fagan suggest, may reflect their greater economic resources. Other Asian immigrants live in areas that are not as well-off as the White neighborhoods, but are more similar to White than to Black or Latino neighborhoods. In both Latino and Asian neighborhoods, the association between immigration and crime is negative in direction, but nonsignificant.

### **New destination sites and anti-immigrant legislation**

The United States has served as a destination site for immigrants since its founding, but most newcomers have settled in just a few states. There has been a substantial demographic shift in the past two decades, however, with the foreign-born population growing at, or above, twice the national rate in 14 states spread across the southern and central regions of the country (Terrazas 2011). And even in states that have traditionally received immigrants, newcomers are settling in areas where they were not visible in such numbers in the past.

The rapid influx of immigrants into new destination sites is largely driven by employment opportunities, including jobs at meat-processing plants and other new industries (Harris and Feldmeyer 2013). Yet while the rise in immigrant concentration benefits local businesses, the increased labor market competition is often a source of tension and conflict. For some residents, the changing demographics and competition for jobs constitute a racial threat (Stewart 2012; Wang 2012; Longazel forthcoming; ). This threat, in turn, is often manifested in a 'moral panic' about the dangers of immigration and immigrants. In response, local and state governments have introduced and enacted an unprecedented number of restrictive immigration laws and ordinances in recent years (Newton 2008; Varsanyi 2010b; Provine et al. 2012; Sinema 2012; Welch 2012; Longazel 2013).

From 2005 to 2007, the number of proposed immigration-related bills more than quintupled, from 300 to 1,562, with a corresponding increase of 240 bills enacted in 2007 from 39 in 2005

(Johnston and Morse 2012). This high level of legislative activity continued over the next five years, with a record 1,607 bills introduced in 2011.

Many of the harshest anti-immigrant laws and ordinances arise in new destination sites, where immigration has less of a protective effect on crime and victimization. Even Arizona, which has always been a transit site, is a relatively new destination point for immigrants. Following passage of Arizona's SB 1070, which authorized local police to determine immigration status during any lawful stop, required people to carry alien registration documents and permitted warrantless arrests if the offense would make the person removable from the country, similar legislation was enacted in other new destination sites, including Alabama, Georgia, Indiana, South Carolina, and Utah.

The US Supreme Court has blocked most of Arizona's SB 1070, and perhaps in response some localities have backed away from their earlier anti-immigrant hysteria and are even passing legislation that expands benefits for certain categories of immigrants, especially those who came to the US as young children (Morse 2014). Nevertheless, the anti-immigrant sentiment has not abated, as evidenced as recently as February 2014, when nearly 60 percent of voters in Fremont, Nebraska, opted to keep an ordinance that requires renters to apply for a permit and attest to their legal status (Funk 2014).

### **Immigration and victimization**

The question of whether immigration increases crime has been definitively answered – it does not. A multitude of studies demonstrate that immigration significantly and substantially reduces crime, though there are important nuances and caveats to this general conclusion. That is, immigration decreases crime, especially violent crime, in traditional receiving communities characterized by high concentrations of immigrants and a welcoming ethnic enclave providing newcomers with sources of employment, strong social and familial ties, and community resources through religious and other neighborhood-based institutions. In new receiving communities where these resources are not as evident, immigration serves less of a protective role. In addition, studies have shown that generational status, national origin, race and ethnicity also condition the relationship between immigration and crime.

But what about victimization of immigrants? While the imaginary relationship between immigration and crime has generated a moral panic, and politicians and pundits have jumped on this bandwagon to propose harsh legislation designed to encourage people to 'self-deport' (to borrow the expression from presidential candidate Mitt Romney), these political actors have said little about the victimization of immigrants. We suggest that this anti-immigrant fervor makes immigrants especially vulnerable to exploitation and victimization. As we discuss below, the involvement of law enforcement officers in immigration control makes residents of communities with large numbers of undocumented immigrants afraid to call upon or cooperate with the police and this, in turn, makes them particularly attractive targets for victimization.

We have not found recent estimates of the numbers of immigrants who are the victims of crime, but Kittrie (2006) extrapolated from estimates of violent crime and estimated numbers of undocumented immigrant adults in the United States in 2004, concluding that undocumented immigrants were the victims of at least 200,000 violent crimes and one million property crimes annually. That estimate is now a decade old, and we can assume the numbers are higher, given increases in the immigrant population and the increased vulnerability of immigrant communities due to the expansion of immigration enforcement into the interior (see Provine and Zatz, Chapter 23 in this volume).

Drawing from theoretical work on the Latino paradox and on modified social disorganization theory, we ask whether the same protective factors that reduce crime in immigrant communities also reduce victimization. Conversely, does their relative absence in new destination sites leave immigrants more vulnerable to exploitation and violent victimization? In addition, we ask whether these vulnerabilities are exacerbated by anti-immigrant legislation and local ordinances that result, at least in part, from the moral panic about immigration and crime.

To shed light on these questions, we explore three areas of vulnerability: (1) the dangers associated with entering the country; (2) employment as day laborers and domestic workers; and (3) violence in the home and community safety. These forms of victimization are by no means exhaustive, and serve simply to highlight the dangers faced by immigrants and to help us consider whether and how the wave of anti-immigrant legislation has made immigrants and their communities even more vulnerable.

### *Entering the country: border deaths, violence and exploitation*

Former Immigration and Naturalization Services Commissioner Doris Meissner and her colleagues subtitled their report on the complex, interlocking system of immigration enforcement in the United States ‘the rise of a formidable machinery’ (Meissner et al. 2013). On the country’s southern border with Mexico, the ramping-up of fences, technology, and personnel has forced migrants to cross the border in increasingly remote areas where they are more likely to become lost and where the risk of death from dehydration, heat stroke, hypothermia and drowning is heightened (Government Accountability Office 2006; Guerette 2007; Nevins 2008; Weber and Pickering 2011; Meissner et al. 2013). Not trusting the federal government to enforce the border, civilian vigilante groups have taken up arms along the border as well (Kil and Menjívar 2006; Chavez 2008; Fan 2008; Doty 2009).

In response to these increased risks, the business of transporting persons across the border has been transformed from small-scale smuggling operations to organized trafficking schemes (Guerette and Clarke 2005; Chacon 2010). Kidnappings, rape, extortion and involuntary servitude or prostitution to repay escalating costs en route have become relatively routine elements of this trafficking (Kil, Menjívar and Doty 2009; Chacon 2010).

Recognizing the limitations of existing law, the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 (TVPA) and reauthorizations in 2003, 2005, 2008 and 2013 sought to prevent trafficking in persons, identify methods of prosecuting traffickers, assist victims and monitor other nations’ responses to human trafficking. The Act created a special T visa for victims of human trafficking who assist law enforcement with the investigation and prosecution of trafficking cases (Chacon 2010). The T visa is capped at 5,000 allocations per year for individuals, not including visas for the recipients’ immediate family members. Its use was slow initially, with only 1,168 T visas approved for individuals and another 925 for family members during the period 2005–9, but they have risen steadily (USCIS 2010). The latest available data covers the first three quarters of 2013, during which time 681 individual and 731 family member visas were approved, indicating that the numbers continue to rise (USCIS 2013). Yet the number of visas approved remains far below the 5,000 visas annually that had been anticipated when the law was created, suggesting either that there is less trafficking than scholars and advocates had anticipated or, more likely, a continued reluctance and inability of trafficking victims to come forward.

### *Violence and exploitation in the workplace*

A second area in which immigrants, and especially undocumented immigrants, are vulnerable is in the workplace. Valenzuela et al. (2006) found that 49 percent of day laborers they surveyed reported wage theft by employers and 18 percent were victimized by violent employers, often in the context of confrontations over payment for work completed. More recently, Waren (forthcoming) reports that 78 percent of the Latino day laborers surveyed in post-Katrina New Orleans were the victims of wage theft in 2008.

The risks of both violent assaults and theft are even greater when immigrants are perceived to be unlikely to report victimization because of fears of the police and of deportation, for day laborers with limited English language skills, and for those working in isolated conditions (Guerette 2006; Bauer 2009; Ramírez and Hondagneu-Sotelo 2009; Fussell 2011; Cepeda et al. 2012; Waren forthcoming; Negi, Cepeda and Valdez 2013). As Negi, Cepeda and Valdez note, day laborers' exposure to robbery, assault, and home invasions is aggravated by general knowledge that they carry cash on their person or hide money in their homes, and that they are unlikely to report the crime to the police (2013: 362). In addition, these researchers note that undocumented day laborers, janitors, landscapers, nannies, and others working in the informal sector often have to put in long hours, work at a fast pace, accept late, partial and meager payments, endure harassment and tolerate violations of labor laws due to their precarious legal status.

As Cepeda et al. (2012) conclude from their study of Latino immigrant day laborers in post-Katrina New Orleans, these risks are also racialized, with clashes between displaced African Americans and Latino day laborers erupting into violence at times. Conflicts also arise among the immigrant populations, with Central Americans distrusting their Mexican co-workers due to violence and theft they may have encountered on their journey through Mexico.

These risks are also gendered. While male day laborers may face the greatest danger of robbery on the streets, undocumented women working as nannies, maids and caregivers are also at great risk of exploitation and abuse (Chang 2000; Hondagneu-Sotelo 2001; Ehrenreich and Hochschild 2002). And, because they are hidden behind the closed doors of their employers' homes, they are especially vulnerable to sexual and other assaults by their employers.

These dangers appear to be especially pernicious in new destination sites, where the social supports typical of traditional destinations, or what Shihadeh and Barranco call the protective social control 'umbrella', are limited or nonexistent (2013: 82). As a consequence, new destinations do not offer a way to 'mediate the negative effects of poverty, discrimination, street culture, and ethnic and racial tensions that contribute to crime' (Negi, Cepeda and Valdez 2013: 365–6).

### *Violence in the home and community safety*

A substantial body of research demonstrates that immigrant women are vulnerable to intimate partner violence, and both the risk of violence and the fear of reporting victimization to the police are exacerbated when the woman is undocumented (Menjívar and Salcido 2002; Menjívar and Bejarano 2004; Salcido and Adelman 2004; Gillis et al. 2006; Erez and Globokar 2009; Erez, Adelman and Gregory 2009; Vidales 2010; Pearce and Sokoloff 2013). Multiple factors converge to explain this underreporting, including lack of resources and knowledge of the law, fear of arrest and deportation, reliance on the abusive partner for economic support, isolation, pressure from other family members not to report the abuse, fear of retribution and language difficulties.

In addition, when the abusive partner has legal residency in the United States and his partner does not, the batterer may threaten to call immigration authorities or withdraw petitions for citizenship if she calls the police (Menjívar and Salcido 2002; Morash et al. 2007; Erez and

Globokar 2009). This risk is especially great in states with dual arrest policies for domestic violence or where child protective services become involved. In such circumstances, the victim could be deported and the violent partner granted sole custody of the children, thus potentially putting the children at risk and permanently separating the victim of abuse from her children (Wessler 2011).

Victims' reluctance to report domestic abuse may be intensified in new destination sites. In a pair of studies conducted in the new gateway city of Baltimore, Maryland, Sokoloff and Pearce (2011) and Pearce and Sokoloff (2013) examine awareness of intimate partner violence, finding that immigrants were more apt to reach out to co-ethnics than to law enforcement in cases of abuse. They argue further that social location is critical to understandings of intimate partner violence, and that victims feared immigration detention and deportation even more than they feared further violence from their partner, making them wary of calling on the police for help. This risk may be especially great in new destination sites because of the relative isolation experienced by the women. In contrast, they may experience greater protection in more traditional receiving communities. This suggestion also finds support in research by Wright and Benson (2010), who found that neighborhoods with large immigrant populations have lower levels of intimate partner violence, perhaps because the women are less isolated.

In recognition of the special risks confronting immigrant women, the *Violence Against Women Act* of 2000 created the U visa for undocumented immigrants who have suffered substantial physical or mental abuse as a result of being the victim of certain specified crimes and who have assisted authorities in investigating and prosecuting the crimes. Yet it was not until 2008 that any U visas were approved, and it has only been since the fiscal year 2010 that the full annual allocation of 10,000 U visas (not including visas for derivative family members) has been approved (USCIS 2013). Even more telling, far more applications come in than can be approved. Thus, almost 25,000 applications for U visas were received in the fiscal year 2012 – far more than the 10,000 visa cap – plus another 15,000 for applicants' family members. Fewer than 3,000 of the visa requests were denied; the remainder simply could not be granted, given the cap. This pattern appears to be continuing into the fiscal year 2013, since at the end of the third quarter more than 19,000 U visas and 14,000 derivative visas had already been requested (ibid.).

This situation, in which undocumented victims of domestic violence have come out of the shadows to ask for help but were then denied because of a shortage of U visas, likely contributes to the reluctance of immigrants to turn to the police for help. This reluctance is further aggravated in locales that require law enforcement officers to engage in immigration enforcement. Such policies fly in the face of efforts by police departments to cultivate improved relations with communities that include large numbers of immigrants (Davis, Erez and Avitabile 2001; Skogan 2009; Kirk et al. 2012; Provine et al. 2012).

## Conclusion

The research literature is clear that immigration reduces crime rates in traditional destination sites across the United States, though this effect is lessened in new destinations. There are subtle differences and nuances to this general pattern related to generational status, country of origin, racial/ethnic classifications and crime type. Nevertheless, the general pattern is clear. It is also somewhat paradoxical, and contrary to the expectations of early researchers and to the assertions of politicians and pundits who have sought to rally others behind a moral panic linking immigration and crime.

We suggest that these unfounded fears of crime by immigrants have contributed to the rash of anti-immigration laws and ordinances sweeping the United States. It is also important to

recognize that many of the harshest of these laws took root in new destination sites, where economic competition for jobs and rapidly changing demographics combine to make residents wary of newcomers who look different, speak different languages and have different customs. We argue further that anti-immigrant laws and ordinances have made immigrants more vulnerable to victimization and exploitation, and their communities less safe. Finally, we suggest that this vulnerability is especially great in new destination sites, where the broad protective umbrella of social services, extended family and employment options found in traditional ethnic enclaves is lacking.

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