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Undocumented Immigrants and Violent Crime:

An Indecisive Story

By

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Tables .....	vi
Abstract.....	vii
Chapter I: Introduction and Literature Review.....	1
Chapter II: Hypothesis & Methods.....	15
Chapter III: Results .....	20
Chapter IV: Discussions.....	27
Chapter V: Conclusions.....	31
Work Cited .....	35

## List of Tables

Table 1 Descriptive Statistics.....	20
Table 2 2013 OLS Regression.....	21
Table 3 2014 OLS Regression.....	23
Table 4 2013 Results vs 2014 Results Part 1 .....	24
Table 5 2013 Results vs 2014 Results Part 2.....	25

## Undocumented Immigrants and Violent Crime: An Indecisive Story

Thesis Abstract--Idaho State University (2019)

This paper seeks to better understand the relationship between undocumented immigrants and violent crime. Subsections of violent crime include murder, two definitions of rape, robbery, and assault. The sample represents 148 U.S cities across the years 2013 and 2014 and draws data from UCR and the Census Bureau. A standard OLS regression was used to obtain the results. The test takes into account heteroscedasticity and multicollinearity. The results indicates a null to a negative effect with violent crime.

Keywords: Undocumented Immigrants, Violent Crime, National Sample

## Chapter 1

### Introduction & Literature Review

As with many subjects, immigration has two sides to every story. In recent decades immigration to the United States have grown substantially (Massey 2014). This has caused some public alarm among the native-born citizens (Zatz and Smith 2012. MacDonald 2009) even to the point of developing militant groups to safeguard borders (Kil, Menjivar, Doty 2009). Despite the media's portray of a resurgence of paranoia and or racism, these concerns have existed for centuries and are not exclusive to the current times (Massey 2014, Reid, Weiss Adelman, Jaret 2005). Currently, there is a debate within academia as well in the public sphere if immigrants are law-abiding individuals. For example, "Do more immigrants cause higher crime rates?" Twenty-five percent of respondents said this was "very likely," and another 48% said this was "somewhat likely," resulting in nearly three-fourths believing that immigration and crime go hand in hand." (Macdonald 2009).

Public opinion is further clarified in the following, "According in 2010 the Pew Research Hispanic Center found that 68% of Hispanic immigrants worried that they or someone they know would be deported and 32% of the native-born Latino population had the same worry about friends or family. "As of 2006, almost half of all Americans (48 percent) opined that "newcomers from other countries threaten traditional American values and customs," and 54 percent said that the United States needed to be "protected against foreign influence." Not surprisingly, given these views, 49 percent said they believed that "immigrants kept to themselves and do not try to fit in," 56 percent said they "don't pay their fair share of taxes," and 58 percent believed that immigrants "do not learn English in a reasonable amount of time" (Kohut and Suro 2006, Massey 2014). These polls only reinforce the need to clarify the



relationship between immigrants and the native-born but also the relationship between the immigrants and United States policy.

Regardless of the immigrant's country of origin, the concern and alarm still exist until they, the most recent immigrant group, assimilate into American society and thus perceived threat is negated (Miller and Gibson 2011). Reasons for alarm may vary but two common concerns are that the immigrants will change the way of life in a community or that immigrants will increase the crime rate in the area. The purpose of this paper addresses the latter concern. Depending upon the nature of the study, and the measures therein, results may not give the clearest picture. However, despite there not being complete conformity, I will address the two main parties and additionally, the shortcomings, which I was able to identify in the literature. For the sake of being unbiased, the literature review will discuss both sides of the argument as well as gaps within the literature itself.

One of the main arguments that suggest that immigrants do not raise the crime rate is that typically the immigrant population, and with it, the undocumented immigrant, has a strong amount of group cohesiveness within their communities (Stowell et al 2009). Using Hirschi's control theory (Hirschi 1969) and Durkheim's theory on group effervescence, we see how this would support this finding. Hirschi's theory proposes the idea that being more involved within one's own community the stronger the social bonds will become and thus you will have a decreased likelihood of committing crime. Regarding Durkheim's theory, the more an individual participates and engages in activities the more loyalty they will feel towards this organization. It should be noted that often in the realms of academia, group effervescence is applied towards a religious organization, such as a church. However, for the purpose of this study, this social theory is applied to communities. The rationale behind this is that just as a church or a religion

becomes more central to an individual's life as attendance increases, an individual will experience the same social phenomenon within their communities as they interact more with the members that reside therein. In other words, as an individual associate with other members of their community or neighborhood, their group identity and loyalty to the group increases and thereby their likelihood to commit crime decreases. With individuals feeling a sense of belonging and being watched over by the community, there is evidence to support that immigrants are less likely to commit crime. For example, "three dimensions of neighborhood stratification—concentrated disadvantage, immigration concentration, and residential stability—explained 70% of the neighborhood variation in collective efficacy. Collective efficacy, in turn, mediated a substantial portion of the association of residential stability and disadvantage with multiple measures of violence, which is consistent with a major theme in neighborhood theories of social organization." (Sampson, Raudenbush, Earls 1997.) In other words, it is the living in a disadvantaged neighborhood that is a stronger predictor to commit crime, rather than possessing the status of undocumented immigrant. Additionally, as the immigrants form their own ethnic communities, like Chinatown or little India, immigrants tend to try to help one another as to help each other to improve their livelihood. This could happen through several forms such as providing job recommendations and letting new incoming immigrants know of vacancies within the neighborhood (Waldinger 1997). The same would be true with the undocumented immigrant as well as they are in essence a subset to the immigrant population as a whole.

Additionally, immigrants are a self-selective group. That is to say, the majority of immigrants choose to move from their country of origin, often seeking a better life. Therefore, these individuals are driven to perform well, be it staying within the law or working harder in legitimate areas, in order to improve the lives of themselves and their families. In addition, the

fear of deportation further drives the immigrant population to be contributing members of society. By being productive members of society, immigrants hope to obtain and live the American dream (Stowell et al 2009.) As one study so put it, “many immigrants are highly motivated to come to the United States to pursue economic and educational opportunities that are not available in their home countries. They seek to build better lives, are willing to work hard, defer short-term gratification in the interest of longer-term advancement, and are likely to avoid actions that put them in opposition to mainstream norms and values of American society” (Ousey, Kubrin 2009).

Taking advantage of this mindset, there is also evidence to support that an immigrant community can revitalize a particular area. By bringing in new businesses and workers, an area that was once downtrodden and experiencing urban decay may become a healthy community once again. Furthermore, immigrants, although tend to work in lower paying jobs, are no longer stuck in these positions (Wadinger 2017 Kahlenberg 2014). Immigrants who possess advanced skills and training may be paid very well or may start up their own businesses which will provide an increase of stimulation to the local economy. Alternatively, scholars acknowledge that immigrants do face certain challenges regarding upward mobility. For example, “Whereas earlier European immigrants entered American cities at a time when manufacturing jobs were plentiful and provided a means of upward mobility, new immigrants must confront an “hourglass economy” that bifurcates opportunities for employment between menial low-wage jobs at the bottom and high-skill professional and technical jobs at the top and provides very limited opportunities for immigrants to advance beyond the bottom rung of the economic ladder without substantial investments in human capital and acquisition of requisite social networks” (Ousey Kubrin 2009). Despite the challenges, the article continues to address that often times, where they

settle, is better than the situations that they left behind, “many immigrants are highly motivated to come to the United States to pursue economic and educational opportunities that are not available in their home countries. They seek to build better lives, are willing to work hard, defer short-term gratification in the interest of longer-term advancement, and are likely to avoid actions that put them in opposition to mainstream norms and values of American society”

However, with the revitalization in a community, immigrants may displace or reform those who were committing crime and therefore the immigrant population would lower the crime rate. However, there are those who say while this may indeed reduce a crime rate in a particular area, it is merely displacing the poor and potential criminals, are just shifting the problems to other areas (Waldinger 2017.)

In regard to responding to the neighborhood variable, it is important to note how the law is enforced and patrolled in a particular area. One study (Kelling 1982) finds that the neighborhoods where police officers only patrol an area within their car, the police are seen with a higher degree of suspicion and disrespect. Alternatively, communities where officers patrolled on foot, and thus able to interact with the public more easily and not separated from them with their vehicle, officers are seen more as an ally of the people and not an intruder. An additional study notes that the variable of the neighborhood would be a good predictor of whether or not individuals are likely to commit crime. Which neighborhood an undocumented immigrant may play a larger role in the likelihood to commit violent crime rather than the undocumented immigrant status. In other words, in more closely knitted communities, an individual would be less likely to engage in crime. Alternatively, should the undocumented immigrants settle in less than ideal environments, their likelihood to engage in violent crime would increase.

One possible suggestion why immigrants may raise a crime rate is a clash of cultures may make some individuals more prone to commit criminal activities (Stowell 2007). Several European based studies present evidence that immigrant's culture plays an impact on their likelihood to commit crime or not. For example, following the decades after World War Two, immigrants tend to lower the crime rate within the European nations. However, come the 1980's this trend not only tended to stop, but the opposite trend occurred (Chaplin 1997, Killias 2009). One possible explanation is that due to where the immigrants originate from. For example, in the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, a lot of the immigrants were from other European nations, and therefore had similar cultures, ways of life and values. Whereas, now immigrants are not coming from neighboring country's but from different regions entirely.

Focusing upon the United States, and starting with the Chicago school of thought, it was believed that immigrants raise the crime rate in a particular area. However, in the following years, many of the theories were rejected and the measures and methods of the initial studies were called into question. With the studies from the contemporary age, they mostly found that immigrants lowered the crime rate. However, with the current literature, the findings are mixed. (Ousey & Kurbin 2018). I believe the reason for this change could in part be attributed to the reasons mentioned in the European articles, such as a clash of cultures or immigrants originating from different countries would have an impact on the crime rate.

With the subpopulation of undocumented immigrants, there is evidence to support the idea that these individuals are more likely to get in into illegal job opportunities as they are unable to obtain legitimate employment. However, a Swedish study found that one out of three undocumented immigrants committed criminal activity within three years of entering the country, thus lending support that immigration raises a crime rate (Killias 2009). Similarly, it is

predicted that out of the South American immigrants, one in three immigrants are undocumented (Camarota 2016). Within the United States, it is predicted that 19% of the prison population is comprised of undocumented immigrants (Camarota Vaughan 2009.) These are based upon the condition that one waves their illegal status as a criminal offense (Stowell 2007). Alternatively, the undocumented immigrants who do obtain semi-legitimate work, such as doing productive or but perhaps getting paid under the table, are more likely to be abused or taken advantage of by their employers. Due to fear of going to the police and being deported, the undocumented immigrants remain silent and endure the negative treatment. In these cases, it is not the immigrant population that is committing the crime but rather their employers. However, there are those who say that without this population to manipulate or exploit, the employers would have to turn to legitimate means and practices (Facchini, Mayda, and Puglisi 2017. Stowell 2007). This raises another aspect that some theories raise but have yet to test or measure, that being “Does the immigrant population enable the native-born population more likely to commit and get away with crime?” (Kurbin, Ishiwaza 2012). Unfortunately, this question is out of the scope of this study, however, it is worth noting for future studies. One possible reason is that with the increasing immigrant population, there are fewer jobs to go around. (Ousey & Kurbin 2009). Therefore, with economic disparity, individuals may turn to criminal behavior to make ends meet or to maintain a standard of living. However, in order to answer this question, an additional series of qualitative studies would have to take place, with the goal to establish exactly how common this event takes place and to what degree.

One additional issue that suggests that immigrants lead to a higher crime rate is the immigrant's children have been found more likely to become delinquent and therefore more likely to engage in criminal behavior (Miller & Gibson 2011). The biggest explanation for this is

that immigrant children are trying to navigate between the two different cultures. Additionally, another possibility for this situation is that the immigrant's parents are spending more time at work, trying to make ends meet, and therefore have less time to supervise their children, which allows them to further engage in deviant behavior. Regardless, should further studies support this finding, this would lend an additional argument for those supporting the notion that immigrants do tend to lead to an increase in crime, albeit a generation later. The line could be blurred as the children born in the United States would not be immigrants and therefore it could not be as easily stated that the immigrant population leads to a higher crime as they would be citizens of the United States.

In the United States, one may hear a resurgence of racism and it is due to discrimination that immigrants, particularly undocumented immigrants, may be more prone to be stopped by law enforcement. Therefore, the numbers would be artificially inflated as the potentially different goal of policing in heavily immigrant communities. While certainly acknowledging the potential of such cases, I do not believe that this is a trend that speaks for all law enforcement officials. For example, based upon a Swedish study, “2) they contradict the view that higher crime rates among immigrants are obviously due to discrimination (i.e. differential reporting by victims, unequal police reactions and discrimination within the criminal justice system) – except if one wants to assume that the Swiss of 1970 were more tolerant towards migrants than those in recent years” (Killas 2009). Looking at this argument from a historical perspective does seem logical. This can easily translate to American society as well as the civil rights movements were taking place relatively close to this comparison. It is the author’s opinion that if there is a degree of racism and prejudice, it is to a lesser extent compared to several decades ago.

The study continues. "all known illegal residents, around 30 percent are known to the police for common offenses (i.e. without offenses related to their status as immigrants) after the first year of residence. This proportion is far higher than even among a young male population." Even if the stat is slightly incorrect, that is over 1 in 4 illegal immigrants are involved in illegal activity. However, if the stat is indeed accurate that brings us to almost 1 in 3. Additionally, the articles claim that the majority of the crimes happen within a short amount of time of entering the country, thus contradicting the idea that only after lack of opportunity do they resort to illicit behavior. With this in mind, one would expect to see a large number of arrests within the United States after a surge in immigrants.

However, there is a hybrid situation. One article suggests that immigrants have strong work ethics and thus displace workers from the native-born populace. The article goes onto to give an account of various managers across several industries describing the reasons why they prefer to higher immigrants. For example, "black employees say this job is too hard." A hotel manager said that she "hired black room attendants and after 2 or 3 weeks they quit. They don't want the work. It's too hard." But the basic problem seemed to be that blacks just expected more. "There are lots of recriminations of mistreatment, favoritism," noted the manager of a regional fast-food chain. "It's not universal. But I encounter them with too much frequency." Employers, as in the case of a fast-food manager, were often unhappy with "the attitude they project. They either have an attitude that you owe them a job because they're a black male, or they kick back and say if you fire them, they'll sue for discrimination and you can't do anything about it." (Waldinger 1997). While these scenarios may certainly be a possibility, there is a need for more research to be done to support these claims as the article they stem from are semi-dated. However, if they are indeed still relevant and accurate it brings up an interesting situation, that



being, "Are native-born individuals more likely to commit or resort to criminal activities as the immigrant population increases." While this study will not attempt to address this question, it is worth noting that the answer to this question would heavily impact the public sphere if a relationship was found.

There are several gaps in the literature that previous studies have identified, the most common being, lack of quantitative studies analyzing the impact of immigrants and crime rates. (Kurbrin, Hipp, Kim, 2016). Additionally, there are studies that only focus on violent crime with limited measures, such as only using rape and murder to define violent crime (Martinez 2009). While measures of extremely violent crime are important and necessary to account for, there are just as relevant less extreme violent crime that should also be taken into account. Additionally, often times the measure of property crime and drug use are not included in the overall analysis. I feel by further expanding the measure of crime, such as, robbery, extortion, harassment, and sexual and aggravated assault for violent crime, and burglary, larceny-theft, motor vehicle theft, shoplifting, arson and vandalism representing property crime, one would gain a more accurate portrayal of the relationship between immigrants and crime. (Nielsen and Martinez 2009).

Furthermore, there is a public concern of drugs coming across the border so I feel that it would be appropriate to include drug use as a variable to address this concern. The author acknowledges the difficulty of drawing upon multiple cohesive datasets however, the results may be enlightening. Alternatively, countering this idea, one study puts forth the following statistic, "83% of solved homicides were unrelated to drug activity," (Martinez 2006). With this statistic in mind, one may argue that the drug variable would not be worth studying when relating to the variable murder. However, the study does not take account for other measures of violent crime

such as robbery and aggravated assault. Thereby, the author stands by his original viewpoint that including a measure on drug use or sales would be beneficial to any study.

An additional limitation of the studies is that there has not been a national study analyzing immigrants and crime. The majority of the studies typically focus on specific cities or several cities (Zojonic 2017). While this does provide some information, it does cause a limitation on generalizability. By focusing on a state, region or a national scale, a study would have a much larger impact in the literature and potentially in a public scene. Alternatively, there have been few studies that address immigration in rural communities. By expanding the scope of the studies, all ways of life may be further incorporated into the analysis. The difficulty of this, however, is that these rural datasets may not exist and developing these datasets would almost certainly be of qualitative origins. While this certainly is not a negative aspect, it is limiting as ideally both qualitative and quantitative studies would be in place.

An additional limitation, whose solution would almost certainly be qualitatively based, is that the typical study does not take into account how long immigrants, undocumented or otherwise, have been in the country, (Stowell 2007). Using Hirschi's control theory, one would expect different trends between the immigrant who has just migrated and settled into a new area and the immigrant who has been settled for multiple years. For example, the relatively recent immigrant, and likewise their children, would have relatively low social ties as they are in an alien environment and thus increase their likelihood to engage in criminal activities.

Alternatively, an individual who has been accepted into their society and their community would be less likely to engage in criminal activities. As previously mentioned, in order to accurately measure how recently one migrated and to what level they feel included or supported by their community, these studies would be of a qualitative nature.

One final limitation of the studies is how they treat the immigrant population as a homogenous group (Sampson 2008). On the flip side, the native-born populations are also treated as a homogenous group (Kurbrin, Hipp, Kim, 2016). Several studies call for dividing the population based on race or country of origin. In doing so, one would be able to gather information if certain immigrants are more or less likely to engage in criminal behavior depending on the reference group. For example, “Blacks are 6 times more likely than Whites to die by homicide, a crime that is overwhelmingly interracial in nature. Homicide is the leading cause of death among young Blacks, and both police records and self-reported surveys show disproportionate involvement in serious violence among Blacks. Surprisingly, however, Latinos experience lower rates of violence overall than Blacks despite being generally poorer; Latino rates have been converging with those of Whites in recent years.” ( Sampson, Morenoff, Raudenbush 2005). Based upon this finding it would be more logical to compare the undocumented immigrant population to multiple reference groups in order to identify where in the spectrum these immigrants fall.

Currently, the vast majority of immigrants who are coming to the United States originate from Latin American countries and Asian countries (Rivera, Nobles, Lersch 2014, Kurbrin, Hipp, Kim 2016, Henslin 2014, Portes, Rumbaut 1990,). This is nothing recent and has been current trends for decades as illustrated by the following, “In recent years, however, public opinion has once again turned negative toward immigrants. Since the passage of the 1965 Hart-Cellar Immigration Reform Act, which allowed immigrants from non-European countries easier entry, Asian and Latin American immigrants have dominated the migratory streams into the US” (Reid et. al 2005). This point is relevant due to the common misconception by the public and the media that this fear or distrust is a new phenomenon, however, we have, according to the quote,

been experiencing this trend for approximately six decades. By recognizing this trend, and even just by separating the undocumented immigrant population into these two broad groups, could yield significant findings and results. In doing so one would be able to test the theory that culture plays an impact on the likelihood of committing crime. Just as when studying different demographics within the United States yield different results trends, the same would be true for the undocumented immigrant populace. If this theory is indeed true, this could have significant impacts on public policy if results proved to be significant. For example, currently, there is a public debate on limiting or banning individuals from specific countries. If one were to look at each nationality individually one could gauge the merits of such proposals, regardless of which side of the argument one may adhere to.

Additionally, there are some articles which address why the native-born population should not be homogenized and seeks to analyze if a high immigrant population makes native-born populations more likely to commit crime. For example, a study that focused on the LA community found that immigrants displaced African American workers and therefore had an impact on that area. Whereas, the white workers were not displaced and likewise largely unaffected. The article then goes on to suggest that with a loss of jobs among the African Americans, this could spur some members to commit crime. (Waldinger 1997 Kurbrin, Hipp, Kim, 2016).

As evident by the literature review, there is no clear-cut answer, regarding the question, "Are immigrants more or less likely to commit crime?" In order to do my part to answer this question, I plan to merge and analyze data sets in order to approach a national representative study. Furthermore, if the data permits, I would like to expand the way criminal activities are measured by increasing the scope of violent crime. By doing so we will gain a more accurate

answer if undocumented immigrants are committing which violent crimes. Additionally, my data will consist of a measurement of an approximation of undocumented immigrants rather than that of the immigrant population as a whole. Furthermore, the data set examines cities from across the United States thus controlling for any difference in culture across the various regions.

## Chapter 2

### Hypothesis

$H_0$  Undocumented immigrants will have no relationship with violent crime

$H_a$  Undocumented immigrants will have a relationship with violent crime.

It is important to note within my alternative hypothesis that I am not predicting what direction that relationship will be as both sides to the debate have solid arguments and theories supporting their claims. As such it is my responsibility to lend a more clear picture to whichever side the data support without excessive data manipulation to achieve the results that I desire. By consciously acknowledging this goal, this helps eliminate any potential bias.

### Methods

When seeking to understand the relationship between undocumented immigrants and violent crime, it is of paramount importance to analyze the specific violent criminal activities that one may engage in. As such, this study examines the effect that undocumented immigrants, have on the total violent crime rate, murder rates, two measures of rape, (one based upon a legacy definition and one based upon a revised definition,) robbery rates, and assault rates. All measures were based on data from 2013 and 2014. The unit of analysis in this study are cities and metropolitan areas. An OLS regression was used to analyze the data which was first entered into Microsoft Excel and then transferred over to Stata for analysis. Additional tests we also conducted to ensure the most accurate results possible. The test takes into account heteroscedasticity and multicollinearity.

In order to examine the potential relationships, I pull my data from various sources. Data for the crime rates are pulled from the “Uniform Crime Report.” Which are collected by, “cooperative statistical effort of nearly 18,000 cities, university and college, county, state, tribal, and federal law enforcement agencies voluntarily reporting data on crimes brought to their attention.” Demographic variables are gathered from the “U.S Census.” Approximations of undocumented immigrants were collected from Maciag’s study titled, “Analysis: Undocumented Immigrants Not Linked With Higher Crime Rates” in which Maciag gains this data from the Pew Research Center (Maciag, 2014) “The Pew Research Center published 2014 unauthorized immigrant estimates for 155 metro areas, expressed as a share of an area's total population. Pew computed its estimates by subtracting estimated numbers of lawful immigrant admissions from survey estimates of the total foreign-born population.”

The following codes and definitions represent each variable for years 2013 and 2014. The independent variable was the percentage of a city’s populace that is comprised of undocumented immigrants.

The dependent variables in this study are the various acts of violent crime. The total violent crime rate was a combination of all violent crime, including murder, legacy rape, revised rape, robbery, and assault. The rates are reported in rates per 100,000

The dependent variable, murder is defined as “ a.) Murder and nonnegligent manslaughter: the willful (nonnegligent) killing of one human being by another. Deaths caused by negligence attempts to kill, assaults to kill, suicides, and accidental deaths are excluded. The program classifies justifiable homicides separately and limits the definition to: (1) the killing of a felon by a law enforcement officer in the line of duty; or (2) the killing of a felon, during the commission of a felony, by a private citizen. b.) Manslaughter by negligence: the killing of

another person through gross negligence. Deaths of persons due to their own negligence, accidental deaths not resulting from gross negligence, and traffic fatalities are not included in the category Manslaughter by Negligence.”

The dependent variable, legacy rape, is defined as, “The carnal knowledge of a female forcibly and against her will. Rapes by force and attempts or assaults to rape, regardless of the age of the victim, are included. Statutory offenses (no force used—victim under age of consent) are excluded.”

The dependent variable, revised rape, is defined as, “penetration, no matter how slight, of the vagina or anus with any body part or object, or oral penetration by a sex organ of another person, without the consent of the victim. Attempts or assaults to commit rape are also included; however, statutory rape and incest are excluded. In December 2011, the UCR program changed its definition of SRS rape to this revised definition. This change can be seen in the UCR data starting in 2013. Any data reported under the older definition of rape will be called "legacy rape" It should be noted that although the definition change took place prior to the years of this study, certain departments still report in the terms of legacy rape, hence the inclusion of both definitions.

The dependent variable, robbery, is defined as, “The taking or attempting to take anything of value from the care, custody, or control of a person or persons by force or threat of force or violence and/or by putting the victim in fear.”

The dependent variable, aggravative assault, is defined as, “An unlawful attack by one person upon another for the purpose of inflicting severe or aggravated bodily injury. This type of



assault usually is accompanied by the use of a weapon or by means likely to produce death or great bodily harm. Simple assaults are excluded.”

Additionally, each individual model tests demographic variables, which are measured in terms of what percent of the city is comprised of the specific category. The first demographic variable is sex which is defined as, “At the Census Bureau, the sex question wording very specifically intends to capture a person's biological sex and not gender. The ambiguity of these two concepts interferes with accurately and consistently measuring what we intend to measure-- the sex composition of the population.” In terms of this study, I am examining the effect that the percent of a male population has upon the violent crime rate.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> demographic variable is measuring the percentage of each city which is comprised of those who are between the ages of 15-24. This variable is reported in terms of percent.

The Census Bureau determines poverty levels by, “a set of money income thresholds that vary by family size and composition to determine who is in poverty. If the total income for a family or unrelated individual falls below the relevant poverty threshold, then the family (and every individual in it) or unrelated individual is considered in poverty. There is now a second measure of poverty called the Supplemental Poverty Measure or "SPM." Every year since 2010, the Census Bureau has released a report describing this measure The SPM extends the official poverty measure by taking account of government benefits and necessary expenses like taxes that are not in the official measure. It does not replace the official poverty measure and will not be used to determine eligibility for government programs.” For the purpose of the study, all individuals are included. In other words, this variable measures the city's percent of a population that is of low income.

Unemployment is defined as, “All civilians 16 years old and over are classified as unemployed if they (1) were neither "at work" nor "with a job but not at work" during the reference week, and (2) were actively looking for work during the last 4 weeks, and (3) were available to accept a job. Also included as unemployed are civilians who did not work at all during the reference week, were waiting to be called back to a job from which they had been laid off and were available for work except for temporary illness.” This variable measures the unemployment rate in terms of a percent.

White is defined as, “A person having origins in any of the original peoples of Europe, the Middle East, or North Africa. It includes people who indicate their race as “White” or report entries such as Irish, German, Italian, Lebanese, Arab, Moroccan, or Caucasian” So nonwhite are those individuals who do not ascribe to such statues. This measurement is in terms of a percent

Black or African American is defined as, “A person having origins in any of the Black racial groups of Africa. It includes people who indicate their race as “Black or African American,” or report entries such as African American, Kenyan, Nigerian, or Haitian.” This measurement is in terms of a percent.

Education is measured in terms of bachelors attained by those who are twenty-five years or older. For the purpose of this study, I analyze the individuals who have obtained a bachelor’s degree or higher. This measurement is in terms of a percent attached below is the descriptive statistics.

### Chapter 3

#### Results

Table 1: Descriptive table

Variable Names	Mean	Standard Deviation	Min	Max
Immigrantpop	3.54%	2.41	.2%	10.3%
Age	16.5%	.047	5.2%	39.2%
Sex	48.8%	.013	46.5%	56.9%
Poverty	21.4%	.065	4.8%	40.1%
Unemployment	06.6%	.034	1.2%	24.6%
Nonwhite	34.9%	.157	6.2%	82%
Blackpop	21.0%	.266	.07%	63.3%
Education	45.0%	2.727	5.6%	33.5%
Violent rates 2013	757.77	638.007	95.500	6589.398
Murder 2013	9.345	8.898	0	60.797
Legacy rape 2013	22.636	61.736	.543	727.352
Revised rape 2013	34.687	51.313	1.490	366.077
Robbery rate2013	240.570	209.343	13.437	1799.343
Assault rate 2013	459.914	501.484	.064	4363.18
Violent rates 2014	687.562	402.999	.248	3216.207
Murder 2014	18.450	83.373	0	49.909
Legacy rape 2014	10.331	18.004	.191	83.463
Revised rape 2014	48.532	47.719	.152	308.980
Robbery rate2014	214.739	153.146	.489	810.568
Assault rate 2014	417.674	269.776	.123	2319.988

It is important to note the reason for the minimums for legacy rape as well as revised rape. As the UCR changed the definitions just a few years ago, not all law enforcement agencies have adapted to the new definitions. Therefore, there are agencies that only report one of the definitions. For all variables from “immigrantpop” to “education” are measured in terms of percentages. For all variables following “education” are measured in terms of crime rates per 100,000. When analyzing the following OLS regression results, it is worth noting that the coefficients are unstandardized.

Table 2: Violent crime rates 2013

Variable Names	Total violent crime	Murder	Legacy rape.	Revised rape	Robbery	Assault
Immigrantpop	-23.693* <sup>^</sup>	-.137	-.388	-.4.752*	-5.222	-19.341
Age	-1940.426**	-39.636***	63.286	-217.325	-978.79***	-960.090* <sup>^</sup>
Sex	-3217.654	-74.124	147.773	351.77	-1878.489	-.2092.529
Poverty	1230.976*	38.697***	13.530	81.838	.802.947***	106.619
Unemployment	1328.976	.39.479* <sup>^</sup>	24.192	-56.756	793.148*	-72.168
Nonwhite	364.020	14.047**	-42.358*	9.372	333.679***	215.989
Blackpop	201.982	4.366	27.004	-5.495	55.051	.142.393
Education	-8.320***	.031	-.442**	-1.637	-1.912**	-4.257*
# of cases	148	148	83	79	148	148
R <sup>2</sup>	.098	.318	.129	.050	.279	.047
p < .000= ***						
p < .01=**						
p < .05=* <sup>^</sup>						

When measuring total violent crime in 2013, we see the higher the city's population that is comprised of undocumented immigrants, that the overall violent crime rate decreases. Additionally, the more individuals who are between the ages of 14-25 the overall violent crime rate decreases. Alternatively, the more individuals in poverty the overall violent crime rate increases. Finally, the more individuals that have a bachelor's degree or higher the overall violent crime rate decreases.

When measuring murder rates in 2013, the more individuals who are between the ages of 14-25 the overall murder rate decreases. Furthermore, the more individual's in poverty the overall murder rate increases. Additionally, the higher the nonwhite population becomes the murder rate increases. It should be noted that the black population is merged with other racial and ethnic minorities to form the nonwhite population. This is based upon the variance of the

demographic distribution across the cities within the study, thus better adjusting for low levels of observation, see conclusion for further details. The higher the percentage of unemployment the murder rate increases. The higher the population of nonwhites there is, the murder rates increases.

When measuring legacy rape rates in 2013 as a city's population of nonwhites increase legacy rape rates decrease. Furthermore, the more individuals, proportionally that have a bachelor's degree or higher the overall revised rape rates decreases.

When measuring revised rape rates in 2013 we see that the higher the city's population that is comprised of undocumented immigrants, the overall revised rape rates decreased.

When measuring robbery rates for 2013 the more individuals who are between the ages of 14-25 the robbery rates decrease. The more individuals who are in poverty the robbery rate decreases. The higher percentage of a city that is nonwhite, the robbery rates decreases.

When measuring aggravated assault, the more individuals who are between the ages of 14-25 the assault rate decreases. The more individuals that have a bachelor's degree or higher the overall assault rates decreases.

Table 3: Violent crime rates 2014

Variable Names	Total violent crime	Murder	Legacy rape.	Revised rape	Robbery	Assault
Immigrantpop	-12.369	-2.840	.088	-.6.391***	4.836	-4.674
Age	-1038.19*	-291.597	20.495	-245.673**	-739.896***	-267.8486
Sex	-1468.282	-9.709	-50.728	988.38	-1152.68	-.418.246
Poverty	1015.076*	355.505	-24.44	243.503***	742.0361**	370.999
Unemployment	1286.228	.334.405	-2.052	418.106**	1316.427***	785.599
Nonwhite	557.298*	-16.548	-11.485	-47.618*	203.071***	228.888
Blackpop	198.178	-27.828	-3.022	.065	56.421	.142.933*
Education	-7.333***	-.538	.688***	41.962	-2.599***	-5.585***
# of cases	148	148	53	116	148	148
R^2	.205	..082	.055	.279	.279	.105
p < .000= ***						
p < .01=**						
p < .1=*						

When measuring total violent crime in 2014, we see the more individuals who are between the ages of 14-25 the overall violent crime rate decreases. Alternatively, the more individuals in poverty the overall violent crime rate increases. Finally, the more individuals that have a bachelor's degree or higher the overall violent crime rate decreases.

When measuring legacy rape rates in 2014 as more individuals that have a bachelor's degree or higher the overall legacy rape rates increases.

Alternatively, when measuring revised rape rates in 2014 we see that the higher the city's population that is comprised of undocumented immigrants, the overall revised rape rates decreases. Furthermore, the more individuals who are between the ages of 14-25 the revised rape rates decreases. The more individuals who are in poverty the overall revised rape rate increases. The more individuals who are unemployed the overall revised rape increases. The more nonwhites there are in the city, the overall revised rape rates decreases.

When measuring robbery rates for 2014 the more individuals who are between the ages of 14-25 the robbery rates decrease. The more individuals who are in poverty the robbery rate decreases. The higher percentage of a city that is nonwhite, the robbery rates decreases. When the poverty rates are higher the robbery rate increases. When the unemployment rates are higher the robbery rates increase. As nonwhites rates increases in the city, the overall robbery rates increase. Alternatively, the more individuals that have a bachelor's degree or higher the overall robbery rates decreases.

When measuring assault for 2014, the higher the Black or African American population the aggravated assault rate increases. The more individuals that have a bachelors degree or higher the overall assault rates decreases.

Table 4: Violent crime rates 2013 vs 2014 Part 1

Variable Names	Total violent crime 2013	Violent crime 2014	Murder 2013	Murder 2014	Legacy rape 2013	Legacy rape 2014
Immigrantpop	-23.693*	-12.369	-.137	-2.840	-.388	.088
Age	-1940.426**	-1038.19*	-39.636***	-291.597	63.286	20.495
Sex	-3217.654	-1468.282	-74.124	-9.709	147.773	-50.728
Poverty	1230.976*	1015.076*	38.697***	355.505	13.530	-24.44
Unemployment	1328.976	1286.228	.39.479*	.334.405	24.192	-2.052
Nonwhite	364.020	557.298*	14.047**	-16.548	-42.358*	-11.485
Blackpop	201.982	198.178	4.366	-27.828	27.004	-3.022
Education	-8.320***	-7.333***	.031	-.538	-.442**	.688***
# of cases	148	148	148	148	83	53
R <sup>2</sup>	.098	.205	.318	.082	.129	.055

p < .000= \*\*\*

p < .01=\*\*

p < .05=\*

When comparing the results from 2013 to 2014 one may observe several differences regarding levels of significance. For example, when looking at the total violent crime rate for

each year, you will notice that only in the year 2013 is the variable that represents the total amount of a city's populace that is comprised of undocumented immigrants is statistically significant. Age, Poverty and Education remains significant in both years when applied to total violent crime and we see that both lead to a decrease in total violent crime. The variable representing nonwhites is only statistically significant if the year 2014.

When looking at the overall murder rates. We see that Age is only statistically significant in the year 2013 with a decrease in murder rates. Poverty, Unemployment, and nonwhites are also only statistically significant for murder rates in 2013 with a positive correlation. No variables in the model are statistically significant for murder rates in 2014.

When looking at the legacy rape rates for 2013 to 2014, Education's relationship switched directions while maintaining statistical significance. The variable representing the nonwhite population of a city loses its statistical significance from year 2013 to 2014.

Table 5: Violent crime rates 2013 vs 2014 Part 2

Variable Names	Revised rape 2013	Revised rape 2014	Robbery 2013	Robbery 2014	Assault 2013	Assault 2014
Immigrantpop	-.4.752*	-.6.391***	-5.222	4.836	-19.341	-4.674
Age	-217.325	-245.673**	-978.79***	-739.896***	-960.090*	-267.8486
Sex	351.77	988.38	-1878.489	-1152.68	-.2092.529	-.418.246
Poverty	81.838	243.503***	.802.947***	742.0361**	106.619	370.999
Unemployment	-56.756	418.106**	793.148*	1316.427***	-72.168	785.599
Nonwhite	9.372	-47.618*	333.679***	203.071***	215.989	228.888
Blackpop	-5.495	.065	55.051	56.421	.142.393	.142.933*
Education	-1.637	41.962	-1.912**	-2.599***	-4.257*	-5.585***
# of cases	79	116	148	148	148	148
R^2	.050	.279	.279	.279	.047	.105
p < .000= ***						
p < .01=**						
p < .1=*						



When comparing revised rape rates, in both 2013 and 2014, undocumented immigrants are statistically significant in both cases equating to an increase of undocumented immigrants leads to a decrease in revised rape. It is worth noting that undocumented immigrants gain two levels of statistical significance. After this initial variable, the years differ in what variables are statistically significant. In 2014, age and nonwhite experience statistical significance where as they increase revised rape decreases. Alternatively, as poverty and unemployment increases, so does revised rape.

When looking at robbery for 2013 and 2014, we do observe changes regarding levels of significance. While age and nonwhite remain constant, we see that poverty, unemployment, and education experience some change in levels of significance. Transitioning from 2013 to 2014 poverty drops a level of statistical significance. Transitioning from 2013 to 2014 unemployment gains two levels of statistical significance. Transitioning from 2013 to 2014, Education gains a level of statistical significance

When looking at aggravated assault for 2013 to 2014, we see that age loses its statistical significance. Additionally, while the variable representing African Americans, is not statistically significant in 2013, it gains statistical significance in 2014. Education gains two levels of statistical significance transitioning from 2013 to 2014.

## Chapter 4

### Discussion

Based on the results of the regressions, we can say that as undocumented immigrants increase there is no increase of violent crime or that undocumented immigrants do not influence the violent crime rates. Despite these results, there are some limitations to the data which inhibits us from making broad claims.

For example, while the data seems to suggest that there is either no relationship between undocumented immigrants and violent crime, or an inverse relationship between undocumented immigrants and violent crime, we cannot be certain of this relationship. While there is a chance that this statistic is correct there is one limitation to the data that does not allow us to be certain. That limitation being, the data does not tell us is who is committing the crime, rather that the crime is merely occurring within a certain area, in this case, the cities. Therefore, there is the possibility that the undocumented immigrants could not be reporting when they are the victims of various crimes.

In other words, this criminal dataset faces the same limitation that all other criminal data faces, and that is underreporting or even biased reporting. For example, "Part of the reason for this is that it is very difficult to effectively measure crime rates and population levels of immigrants. Crime rates, directly a result of crime reporting, encounter issues due to under-reporting, as it is a fact that not all crime is reported, and differences in reporting techniques vary across different police departments." (Zojonc 2013). Furthermore, often individuals will be victimized by individuals who share their community. With this in mind, it could be that only the most severe crimes get reported to the police as the undocumented immigrants fear deportation.

Therefore, crimes such as robbery may be even more underreported within the undocumented immigrant communities thus making them more prone to criminal activities as they are a safer target.

Further supporting the side that undocumented immigrants are not more criminally oriented than the native-born populace, are the results from the revised rape definitions. In both years undocumented immigrants tend to lower the rape based upon the revised rape definition, which simplified is, “penetration, no matter how slight, of the vagina or anus with any body part or object, or oral penetration by a sex organ of another person, without the consent of the victim. Attempts or assaults to commit rape are also included.” This result could be that those who don’t wish to be deported, are trying to stay within the law and a extreme crime such as rape would be almost certain to result in deportation.

It is interesting to note that the different definitions of rape would cause a different result. With this in mind, it would be interesting to redo some of the more influential pieces of the literature review with primarily the same data sets but with slightly different definitions. If the results are the same, we can be surer of the relationship the variables have together. However, if the variables change statistical significance or even offer up different answers, one may suppose that the relationship between the two variables are not quite as established as some may believe.

A more constantly statistical significantly variable is that of education. This is nothing new to the field of criminology. It is commonly found that the higher the education one has, the less likely one is to engage in criminal behavior. This finding often focuses on the micro level, however, it can easily be applied to the macro level as well. With this in mind, a more highly educated populace would mean a lower crime rate across the city.

However, it is interesting to note the result for legacy rape 2014. It appears that under this definition of rape, the higher the educated a populace the more likely for legacy rape to occur. There are two possible reasons that occur to me for this reason. The first reason is that the year is an anomaly and it just happens to have positive statistical significance in one of the years. This would explain why it appears in the year 2014 and in 2013 we see opposite results. The alternative reason would be that with a higher education, individuals would be more likely to attend a college campus, wherein our society deems that sexual assault is a risk. Both of these theories are purely speculative, however, and the study lacks any data to support either of the claims

It is interesting to note that undocumented immigrants, based upon the 2013 total violent crime results, seems to lower the net violent crime. However, in the year 2014, this relationship becomes statistically insignificant and thereby further complicates the answer to the original question. This finding I feel is important on shedding light on other studies that find results on either side of the argument. Recommendations for future studies would include a time series test that has a minimum of a five-year period. This would allow for more clarity regarding any inconstancy between year to year and thus gain a better understanding of the actual relationship.

Furthermore, one thing that my study adds to the literature is that it is based upon a national sample. This helps account for the different cultures that exists throughout the United States. Additionally, drawing upon a national sample, it allows for better generalizability. However, this also is one of the bigger weakness of the study. Due to the scope of the study, it does not allow one individual to look at specific cities and analyze what amount of the crime was committed by an undocumented immigrant. Future recommendations for this study would to potentially focus on regions, such and the northwest. And thus, allowing for some amount of

generalizability, yet be more manageable. If this approach was taken this would be a series of studies that would take place over the course of several years at the minimum. However, this, in turn, creates its own set of challenges as based upon the literature review, we see that the trends may change simultaneously as the results are written.

## Chapter 5

### Conclusion

Based on the results of this study, the question still remains, “Are undocumented immigrants more or less prone to criminal behavior compared to the native-born populace?” The mixed findings of the regression may support either side of the argument albeit a stronger argument for a decrease in violent crime. While fully acknowledging the limitations of the data and thereby the study itself, these findings still have merit in terms of drawing upon a national source, and thus provides a greater level of generalizability. The author encourages replications and expansions of this study in order to overcome the current shortage of national studies. That being said, it is of paramount importance to support these national studies with data that informs who is committing the criminal activities.

Future studies may wish to do a series of studies in order to gain more specific data which would give further insight into the issue of undocumented immigrants. I would recommend analyzing each of the arrests for the various type of violent crime and then determine if the individual was an undocumented immigrant. Doing this procedure, one would at least be able to more clearly answer the question on if the undocumented immigrants are the victims or the assailants. This procedure, however, is unlikely to be done due to the time extensive nature of such a project. It would clearly require a team to give hope to such a task being completed. Despite the difficult nature, however, I believe that the results and insight from such a study would not only greatly influence the world of academia but would also shape the public sector as well.

Similarly, to the above, I was unable to collect data that discerned the country of origin from one to another. With this shortcoming, the question remains about how culture impacts one's likelihood of committing a crime. There could be stark differences in an undocumented immigrants' likelihood to commit violent crime based upon which part of the world they immigrated from. It is the author's prediction that individuals that immigrate from cultures that are similar to the United States will be less likely to engage in criminal behavior. Whereas if an individual comes from a culture that is significantly different than the United States' culture, they will be more likely to commit criminal activity. Additionally, the data was unable to measure any resemblance of how long any undocumented immigrants have been settled in the county.

Additionally, while accounting for cities of various sizes, the study does not account for smaller towns or rural areas. Due to this, the study may not be applied across the entire United States. Unfortunately, I have been unable to find a data set measuring rural communities. Even though with just sheer numbers, analyzing cities makes the most sense for generalizability, we are unable to account for the agricultural communities that some may say that are being modified the most, due to a potential loss of jobs for the native-born population. Additionally, when taking account for the various types of neighborhoods that one may experience within a large city versus a small town, we are limiting the studies that can connect with the neighborhood variable. In other words, one may expect to find differences in culture between neighborhoods in downtown Chicago and a local farming community on the edge of a college town. Depending on which area an immigrant, undocumented or otherwise, may choose to settle will theoretically have an impact on whether or not they will engage in criminal activities.

The strengths of the study are the national sample size as well as the expansion of violent crime, and that the study analyzes two different years. An additional strength of this study is that

it focuses on undocumented immigrants, rather than just immigrants as a whole. I feel that this is an important distinction given the current interest in the subject by the public. By giving a small amount of insight into the topic we are one step closer to understanding a relationship that has not been studied as well as it could be.

An additional strength of this study is that it attempts to separate the native-born population. By not only accounting for the African American population but the nonwhite population as well. There are cases where a city's nonwhite population and African American population relatively similar, such as the case of Dayton Ohio where the African American population is 41.3% of the city's population and the nonwhite population is 46.4%. In this case, the individuals who are nonwhite and are also non-African Americans do not make up a large portion of the city's populace. However, in the case of Albuquerque New Mexico, the African American comprises 3.3% of the city's total population, whereas the nonwhite and non-African American population is 20.3%, a stark contrast to Dayton Ohio. While it may have been beneficial to narrow down the specific races and ethnicities, I feel by taking a more general approach I keep the observations at a sufficient level to run the appropriate analysis without having a variable with very few observations. It may even be plausible that the less common ethnicities that there are no differences than the mainstream populace. For example, "when the Mariel Cubans were rarely arrested for any killings. In fact, there were so few Mariels engaging in homicide in the late 1980s that the Miami Police Department homicide detectives stopped distinguishing them from other ethnic groups by 1990," (Martinez 2006). In examples such as this, there may be no differences between ethnic groups. However, as the study is qualitative, it may not be generalizable for the entire United States.



In conclusion, the answer to the question, "Are undocumented immigrants more or less likely to commit violent crime compared to the native-born populace?" is a difficult and is too unclear to give a simple yes or no. The truth of the matter is that the answer is partially based upon different definitions of violent crime, as demonstrated with the two different definitions of rape included within this study. What is considered a violent crime, such as deciding to include the less extreme variables such as robbery and aggravated assault, further complicates the matter. Yet, if academia were able to decide upon certain characteristics that are a standard across all future studies, we may be able to move past the personal biases and thus discover the most accurate relationship between undocumented immigrants and violent crime. Furthermore, in doing so we would be able to improve not only the standards of researchers but also able to gain the trust of the public.

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