

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS IN IMMIGRANT-CRIME
LITERATURE

by

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The media, public policy, and popular opinion are consistently driven by the perception that immigration increases crime. Despite this, most empirical research has found that immigrants have lower crime rates than the native born. The research, however, is still characterized by notable gaps. There has been minimal research into the theories political scientists have used to explain the alleged relationship between immigration and crime. This thesis examines the scholarly usage of these theories in the United States. In the first section, this thesis surveys the dominant theories over the last one-hundred years. The second piece analyzes the use and misuse of data in scholarly articles that have led to the popularity of inaccurate theories. Finally, this paper investigates the influence that theories have had on contemporary political discourse on immigration. It is concluded that, despite their policy implications and use in political discourse, theories have not been adequately valued, and have therefore suffered from inadequate empirical support and warrant further studies.

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Section 1: Introduction

The great civic myth of the United States is one of immigration. Immigrants founded the nation, and in turn they were welcomed with open arms (Newton, 2008, 163). But immigration policy and the national discourse have been ambivalent towards immigrants rather than celebratory (Newton, 2008, 163). American xenophobia dates back to Colonial times, and is rooted in the assertion that immigrants create numerous social problems, including--but not limited to--abusing welfare resources, increasing unemployment, and committing a disproportionate number of crimes (Mears, 2001). Anti-immigrant sentiment has persisted across generations, but is especially responsive to economic downturns and framing by the media (Chomsky, 2018, xxi). Xenophobia has been proven to have no basis in fact (Chomsky, 2018, xxi); in her two editions of the same book, Aviva Chomsky (2007, 2018) systematically disproves all twenty-one of the most common myths about immigrants.

Although not covered in Chomsky's work, one common myth is the linking of immigration and crime. But why the connection to crime in particular? Politicians have historically tied immigrants to crime in order to justify immigration reform and government expansion through its capacities for detention and deportation (Gottschalk, 2016, 235-236). The image of the immigrant criminal has also been rooted in public opinion, as Mears noted above. The last third of the 20th Century saw a sudden increase of violent crime in the United States (Hagan and Palloni, 1998, 372). Capitalizing on the surge in crime, the media produced sensational images of crimes committed by immigrants, influencing public opinion, and still permeating to this day (Wortley, 2009, 349). In 2017, forty-five percent of Americans agreed with the statement that

immigrants make “the crime situation worse” (Gallup, 2017). The image of the “Criminal Immigrant” is not applied to all immigrants, however. It is a racialized construct, and is constantly reformed as the demographics of immigrants change over time. In the 21st Century, it refers principally to brown immigrants, particularly those coming from Mexico, Central America, and the Middle East (Gottschalk, 2016, 234).

Although it is factually untrue that immigrants commit more crime (Mears, 2001), the notion of the Criminal Immigrant has been codified through U.S. immigration law and policy, giving it the air of legitimacy. U.S. immigration law has a history of targeting immigrants with a criminal background, implying that they are less desirable. Since the late 1800s, the federal government has had full reign to regulate immigration law. Congress’ first law in 1875 excluded entry to convicts who were immigrating to avoid a prison sentence in their home country, and was expanded in 1891 to exclude immigrants for committing the vague phrase of “crimes involving moral turpitude” (Cook, 2003, 297). In addition to exclusion, committing crimes is also grounds for removal once admitted to the country. Since the phenomenon of “crimmigration law” that started in the 1980s, criminal and immigration laws and procedures have become fused (García Hernández, 2015). This means that criminal convictions often bear immigration law consequences (García Hernández, 2015, 9). The types of crimes that warrant immigration law consequences can be quite expansive. The “aggravated felony” provision of the Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1988 encompasses non-violent misdemeanors like shoplifting or using illegal drugs (Cook, 2003, 298). In addition, within crimmigration law, violations of immigration law are often punished in the criminal justice system (García Hernández, 2015, 3). From 2006 to 2010, arrests for

immigration crimes grew faster than any other federal crime, and do not appear to be slowing down, illustrating the strength and size of the crimmigration law system (García Hernández, 2015, 11).

The criminalization of immigration enforcement has consistently received strong bipartisan support (Gottschalk, 2016, 234). Both President Obama and President Trump have given priority to deporting unauthorized immigrants with criminal histories (Gonzalez-Barrera and Hugo, 2016; Trump, 2017). Democrats and Republican politicians alike have also exaggerated the threat of immigrant gangs entering the country, contributing to the perception that immigrants commit disproportionate violent crime (Gottschalk, 2016, 235). Criminal backgrounds of immigrants who pose no threat to public safety is weighed as more important than other factors, like family ties to the United States (Gottschalk, 2016, 215). The nation has made itself very clear: any contact an immigrant has with the criminal justice system makes them susceptible to recidivism and a threat to public safety, and therefore incapable of making a meaningful contribution to society.

Literature Review

Critical research has emerged over the past century to investigate the factual support for the public perception of the “Immigrant Criminal.” Such research has attempted to reshape the discourse away from stereotypes and towards concrete evidence (Lee and Martinez, 2009, 6). Empirical research has asked the questions: what is the immigrant crime rate and how does it compare to that of non-immigrant natives? And, does immigration increase or decrease crime in the United States? These two

groupings of questions illustrate the fact that crime causation functions on different levels, and each approach will yield answers on different levels (Bloch, 1957, 13).

There have historically been two approaches to investigating the immigrant-crime nexus: the “mass-centered” and the “individual oriented” approaches (Bloch, 1957, 14). The individual oriented approach looks at immigrants directly, asking what characteristics makes a particular immigrant more or less crime-prone, and how he or she compares to a non-immigrant. The mass-centered approach examines on the macro level the phenomenon of immigration, and investigates how this process affects communities within the United States. It includes both how immigration affects the crime rate of the particular immigrant, as well as its impact on native-born crime (Butcher and Piehl, 1998, 459). For example, if immigrants “take” the low-skill jobs of natives, or if they “crowd” the welfare system, it could have the potential effect of inspiring low-income natives to turn to illegal avenues for earning money (Butcher and Piehl, 1998, 459). Although in these scenarios the particular immigrant did not commit the crime, he or she could still be considered the root cause.

The emerging scholarly consensus in the nearly two decades of the 21st Century is that immigration does not increase crime--and may reduce it--and that immigrants themselves are less likely to commit crime than the native born (Lee and Martinez, 2009; Ousey and Kubrin 2009). This substantial body of research includes the works of governmental agencies like the Immigration Commission and the Wickersham Commission. The research has also targeted specialized groups like unauthorized immigrants (Light and Miller, 2017) and specific categories of crime, like those of a violent nature (Ousey and Kubrin 2009). The research has been of a variety of sizes,

investigating the entirety of the United States (Hagan and Palloni, 1998) and specific case studies of cities or regions (Stansfield et al., 2013).

The theoretical research on the immigration and crime issue, however, has been more limited. Political scientists use theoretical frameworks to explain and predict phenomena, in this case, the immigrant propensity towards, or aversion from, crime. When an article reaches a conclusion about the immigrant crime research, it often contains at least one sentence of theoretical explanations. There are three noteworthy articles that discuss and evaluate theories more extensively. Lee and Martinez (2009) performed a literature review on immigrant-crime research from 2000 to 2009, and features a discussion of the dominant theories. Lee and Martinez explain the contradiction between the scholarly consensus that immigrants commit less crime, and the many popular theories that explain why immigrants commit more crime than the native-born (5). Lee and Martinez offer the notion that theories--even the popular ones--can in fact be wrong (5). However, Lee and Martinez do not delve any farther into the question of theory. They do not investigate the data that is used to support incorrect theories, the motivations of the proponents of the theories, or what systematic process could exist to screen theories.

Kubrin (2013) examines the testing of immigrant-crime theories. Kubrin outlines the dominant theories to explain both why immigration could increase and why it could decrease crime, focusing on the way that immigration and crime operate on a macro level--the "mass-centered" approach. Kubrin concludes that despite the number of theories to explain the immigrant-crime relationship, there has been little research to

empirically test them (442). Like Lee and Martinez, Kubrin does not explain what sufficient testing would look like.

Finally, Mears (2001) explains the limitations of existing immigrant-crime research, particularly the methodology and theory. Mears appears to be the only one who puts forward a guide for future research, that will be discussed later on. Despite this, it seems that after Mears, research still focuses on proving or disproving the immigrant crime relationship, rather than testing theory.

My Project

Since the presidential nomination and subsequent election of Donald J. Trump, immigration and crime have never been more connected in popular discourse than ever before. When he announced his candidacy in a speech in June of 2015, he stated:

“When Mexico sends its people, they're not sending their best. They're not sending you. They're not sending you. They're sending people that have lots of problems, and they're bringing those problems with us. They're bringing drugs. They're bringing crime. They're rapists. And some, I assume, are good people.”

After hearing this speech, I became interested in the purported connection between immigrants and crime. Since there has been sufficient literature establishing a negative relationship between immigration and crime, I decided to evaluate the literature from a different perspective: the theoretical frameworks. This thesis analyzes the use of immigrant-crime theories in political science literature first by conducting a brief review of the five dominant theories of the last century. It then examines the use and misuse of data in the literature, and how it came to be that the five dominant theories are all factually inaccurate. Finally, this paper will investigate how theories manifest in

contemporary political life, as evidenced by the rhetoric of President Trump and the Democratic party. The overlap between political discourse and immigrant-crime literature has not yet been explored by others, and provides a new lens through which to think about the framing of immigration and crime.

Terminology and Definitions

The targeted demographic throughout this research is immigrants. I will be using the traditional definition of immigrant: a person who has moved across established state boundaries (Chomsky, 2018, vii). As the United States is a “nation of immigrants,” it can at times be a blurry line to differentiate between immigrants and non-immigrants. Some of the literature I survey includes pieces that group the children of immigrants under the umbrella term “immigrant” for the purpose of distinguishing immigrant and native crime rates. Therefore, in addition to Chomsky’s useful, but limited definition, I will also include people who are placed by the dominant, white society into the bucket of “immigrant.”

The use of the term “immigrant” inherently creates a dichotomy between immigrants and those who are not immigrants. For the latter group, I will use the terms “non-immigrant,” “native born,” and “native” interchangeably to avoid redundancy. The second two terms are not meant to be confused with Native Americans.

Although this paper refers to immigrants as a whole, at certain times I will refer specifically to immigrants who lack the authorization to reside within the United States. The status of these immigrants is highly controversial, and there are a variety of charged terms that carry different connotations. Conservative advocates use the word “illegal,”

while liberals opt for the term “undocumented” because they claim it is more neutral (Haynes et al., 2016, 26). “Undocumented” is misleading in the context of U.S. immigration policy, since many unauthorized immigrants are documented, but have falsified documentation (Newton, 2008, ix). I will use the term “unauthorized” because it is both impartial and the most accurate description. While it may seem trivial, this diction does matter because it can influence public opinion on the immigration debate (Haynes et al., 2016)

The word “crime” is more difficult to define. For the purposes of this research, crime will generally be stipulated as an illegal act that someone is arrested and prosecuted for. Although crime is traditionally defined as any illegal acts committed regardless of detection, in immigrant-crime research, the true number of crimes committed can never be known, so arrest and incarceration rates must serve as proxy. Crime will also be limited to those that apply to both immigrants and non-immigrants alike. Within the context of crimmigration, there is crossover between civil and criminal offenses. There are a plethora of crimes that apply only to (unauthorized) immigrants, such as unlawful entry, unlawful reentry, and possessing a false immigration document (Motomura, 2011, 1828). Since much immigrant-crime literature is comparative between immigrants and natives, considering immigration offenses to be “crimes” would artificially increase the immigrant share of total crime.

Finally, the immigrant-crime nexus, or the connection made between immigrants and crime. The nexus is assumed by some to exist, but existing research has not yet established exactly what the relationship is, or how it operates (Mears, 2002, 285). Mears (2002) asks if it means that immigrants “are more likely than non-

immigrants to be criminals when they enter the U.S.? That they are more likely to become criminals after entering the U.S.? That immigration causes immigrants, non-immigrants, or both to engage in more crime than if there were no immigrants or no changes in immigration flows?” (285). Since the answers to these questions remain unknown, the immigration-crime nexus will be defined as any way that scholars and society have perceived immigrants and immigration to be related to crime.

Section 2: Literature Survey

The immigration-crime nexus has been researched for well over a century, but still no single theoretical framework has had consistent support (Mears, 2001, 12). There is an enormous body of potential theories, but they tend to fall into the three categories of the “social, environmental, and racial” characteristics of immigrants (Abbott, 1916, 122). In order to restrict my research to a manageable size, I conducted a literature review of immigrant-crime research from the 1910s through the 2010s and ascertained the few most dominant theories. Immigrant-crime research is interdisciplinary in nature, and has facets in political science, sociology, criminology, law, psychology, and more. In this case, efforts were made to limit the scope of the articles to the field of political science, so that conclusions could be reached about the nature of political science research. However, not all articles are published in political science journals or are authored by the government--some come from law reviews and psychology journals, for example. Each article does have a strong focus on immigration and crime, and each mention at least one potential theory to explain its results. The sample size of this review was relatively small at only twenty-two articles, or two per decade, but it can provide hints of the dominance of theories over time.

This literature review also does its best to capture the voices of authors from a variety of backgrounds. The authors include those who self-identify as immigrants, like Andrew A. Bruce who immigrated to the United States at the age of 16, eventually becoming a lawyer and judge (Bruce, 1928, 613), and the Indian born Anthony Bottoms (1973). They also include immigrants’ rights advocates (Abbott, 1916), and numerous

university professors (Taft, 1933; Jeffrey, 1959; Powell, 1966; Pressman and Carol 1971; Mears, 2001; Wortley, 2009; Kubrin, 2013; Light and Miller, 2017).

For each article, I assigned a numerical value for every theory that it discusses (*See* Table 1). This allows for the delineation between articles that merely mention a theory in passing, and those where the theory is the article's sole focus. The five most commonly cited and supported theories were Demographic Factors, Opportunity Structure, Acculturation, Culture Conflict, and Social Disorganization (*See* Figures for the distribution of these theories over time).

1. Demographic Factors

The theory of Demographic Factors asserts that the demographic trends in people who choose to immigrate has similarities with the characteristics of groups who most commonly commit crimes. The cited factors tend to be age and gender. Hagan and Palloni (1998) explain that “immigrants are often disproportionately male and at early ages of labor market entry and advancement. Because young males are disproportionately likely to be involved in crime in all parts of the world that we know about (Hirschi and Gottfredson, 1983), this may also contribute to increases in crime” (368). Another characteristic common that has been proposed to influence criminal tendencies is marital status. According to a political scientist in the 1920s, many immigrants are unmarried and unable to benefit from the effects that family life has on suppressing criminality (Hacker, 1929, 430). The literature survey suggests that this

theory dates back over a hundred years, since it was cited in an early report by the United States Immigration Commission (Immigration Commission, 1910, 25).

Regardless of if this theory is correct, immigrant-crime research should control for demographic differences so that the crime rates of young male immigrants are being compared to their true counterparts, instead of, say, elderly non-immigrant women. Even if Demographic Factors was at one point valid, it may no longer be applicable due to changing immigrant demographics. The average age of an immigrant in 2016 was 44, and 51.5% were female (Radford and Budiman, 2016). In addition, 60.3% were married which is substantially higher than the native born marriage rate of 47.8% (Radford and Budiman, 2016). Some scholars even believe that the high rate of two-parent families among immigrants contributes to their lower crime rate (Ousey et al., 2009).

2. Opportunity Structure

Opportunity structure is the umbrella term used by Lee and Martinez (2009) to refer to the lack of resources that causes immigrants to turn to crime. Put simply, “people migrate in search of economic gain, and not finding it to their satisfaction, turn to a criminal approach” (Pressman and Carol, 1971, 232). Opportunity structure refers to the poverty level, low-educational attainment, and general inability to access legal employment that immigrants experience in the United States. In 2005, the Pew Research Center found that nearly 25 percent of high school dropouts were foreign-born, when the foreign born were only 8 percent of the population at the time (Pew Research Center, 2005, “The Higher Drop-Out Rate of Foreign Born Teens). Immigrants are more likely to work in service occupations and less likely to be employed in management and professional occupations than the native-born, and the

median weekly earnings of male immigrants were 79.3 percent of their native counterparts (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2017 “Foreign-Born Workers: Labor Force Characteristics”). According to this theory, immigrants are pushed to turn to illegitimate means for wealth. This takes the blame for crime away from the immigrant and onto the host nation for not better aiding immigrants in their transition (Wortley, 2009, 353).

Despite the high school dropout rate, Opportunity Structure theory may also suffer from the demographic changes of immigrants as the first theory does. Immigrants to the United States are more and better educated than ever before, and are about as likely as the native born to have bachelor’s and postgraduate degrees (Krogstad and Radford, 2018). But that does not change that they have a higher poverty rate and are less likely than natives to own a home (Krogstad and Radford, 2018). If Opportunity Structure theory is correct in its demographic assumptions of immigrants, and immigrants have many risk factors for crime, then their low crime rate is an impressive feat. Perhaps, in immigrant populations, these risk factors have an alternate effect. For instance, instead of causing crime, poverty could be a motivating factor.

3. Acculturation/Second Generation

Acculturation theory explains that immigrants commit more crimes than the native-born because immigrants mold themselves “to the most crime-prone segment of American society” (Alvarez-Rivera et al., 2013, 235-236). Finding themselves in a new and foreign country, immigrants adjust to American life in different ways. English fluency, employment, and education level are factors that indicate an immigrant’s level of acculturation (Alvarez-Rivera et al., 320-321). Second generation immigrants in particular are a key support of acculturation theory. It is stated that second generation

children commit crime in an attempt to fit in with American culture: “Acculturation provides the support and resources that second-generation children need to deal with external obstacles that may hinder their ability to positively adjust” (Alvarez-Rivera et al., 320). Some argue that first generation immigrants are exempt from acculturation because they intend to return to their country of origin while the children adapt material American values (McGahey, 1986, 249). The American standard of living has the potential to dazzle and distract otherwise law-abiding immigrants: “our foreign born have been more impressed by our material culture and our high standard of living than with our fundamental beliefs in decency, honesty, hard work, and a democratic respect for the rights of others” (Elliott, 1957, 191). Ironically, the high crime rates that acculturated immigrants develop in turn hinder assimilation (436).

The graph (*see* Figures) suggests that the popularity of acculturation theory is diminishing, but the limited sample size of twenty-two articles prevents any definitive conclusion. Fears of acculturation and the second generation have, however, become less prevalent in the popular rhetoric, as we shall see. Where this theory went wrong, if it justifies a disproven immigrant-crime relationship, is unclear. It is possible that recent studies, when calculating the immigrant crime rate, discounted second generation immigrants. This is especially probable because crime statistics do not routinely obtain an inmate’s parent’s citizenship status (Van Vechten, 1941, 140).

4. Culture Conflict

Culture Conflict describes the tension that occurs between cultural and religious practices that are accepted in an immigrant's country of origin but are not legal in the United States (Wortley, 2009, 354). Van Vechten (1941) writes: "We must expect to find some criminality in the areas where legal and moral codes differed" (139-140). The act of committing the crime, then, is purely unintentional, and born out of ignorance of U.S. laws (Wortley, 2009, 354). Examples of crimes include domestic violence and blood feud. This theory involves some moral valuation, either implicitly or explicitly favoring one country over another. Hacker (1929) describes Culture Conflict as: "immigrants coming from countries where culture, legislative regulations and national customs are more primitive, will, under better circumstances, more readily succumb to temptations" (432). Hacker applies judgement on countries where such crimes are permissible through the word "primitive." This Eurocentric judgement of differing cultures could explain the flaw in this theory: scholars anticipated a culture clash that never occurred, or never occurred to the extreme of inspiring crime.

5. Social Disorganization

Social Disorganization theory developed in the 1930s in relation to crime by the American sociologist Edwin Sutherland (1934) and still appears popular today. Social Disorganization refers to the disruption that the immigration process causes, leading to a disintegration of community social control. South (1987) writes: "Migration disrupts social relationships and consequently reduces the degree of social integration. This lack of integration weakens constraints on deviant behavior, reduces social support and control, and diminishes the probability that concerned others will intervene to deter

deviant behavior” (15). Immigrants lack a support mechanism to discourage criminal tendencies. This is especially true for marginalized sectors of immigrant groups such as those that are unauthorized, since they are often hindered from forming social ties due to their lack of legal status (Light and Miller, 2017, 3).

The flaw in this theory is that the exact opposite logic may be true. The Immigrant Revitalization theory explains the strong familial bonds and neighborhood communities that many immigrants have in the United States (Lee and Martinez, 2009). Many enclave communities can deter crime through providing surveillance and job opportunities (Lee and Martinez, 2009, 5).

The Five Theories

These five popular theories use different kinds of logic to explain the attributes unique to immigrants that would influence the immigrant-crime rate. Interestingly, all five of these theories seek to justify why immigrants commit *more* crimes than the native-born. This contradicts the data, as the scholarly consensus is that immigrants commit less crime (Lee and Martinez, 2009), so each of these theories must be incorrect in some aspect. The theory survey was relatively small, so it is likely that there are popular theories that explain a negative relationship between immigration and crime that were merely missed in this review due to sample error. However, the survey that Lee and Martinez (2009) conducted between the years 2000 and 2009 also noted the continued popularity of theories despite their inaccuracy. While one comprehensive theory that can explain the crimes of every single immigrant may be too ambitious a task, it is reasonable to expect scholars vet a theory before promoting it year after year.

Section 3: Questions of Data

The fact that theories continue to be popular despite their contradiction of the facts causes us to wonder what, if any, evidentiary basis these theories have to support them. Although theories are, by definition, theoretical, the principal way to prove their accuracy is through data. Without data, a theory runs the risk of being influenced by implicit biases and stereotypes rather than reality (Lee and Martinez, 2009). When it comes to immigrant-crime research, there appear to be certain forms of data that are regularly used. These include the arrest rates of immigrants and the native-born, incarceration rates, demographic information, and case studies. One exemplar is the work of Light and Miller (2017) that supports the immigrant revitalization theory¹ by using multiple data sources to compare the arrest rates of unauthorized immigrants and natives, and demographic and socioeconomic information to explain the relationship (Light and Miller, 2017, 376). But even the best studies are constrained by the inherent limitations of criminal statistics.

Limitations of Criminal Statistics

It is true that all data has limitations. In immigrant-crime literature, there are some common themes in the shortcomings of the relevant data. Most data on immigration and crime comes from criminal statistics like arrest and incarceration rates. This data is often inaccurate, misleading, and unreliable. Of the 22 articles surveyed, nine (40%) mention in some way the limitations of data used in immigrant crime

¹ The theory that tight-knit immigrant communities suppress violent tendencies and reduce crime.

literature. Criminal statistics only reflect those who were caught by law enforcement, not the crimes of the numerous people who escape detection. If immigrants experience prejudice in the criminal justice system, as some scholars assert (Stofflet, 1941, 85), then immigrants may be overrepresented in these statistics, or they could be underrepresented if they are deported rather than prosecuted (Hagan and Palloni, 1998, 372).

Political scientists are limited to the record keeping of correctional departments. These records vary across municipality, and lack any uniformity. It has been known since 1934 that these records are untrustworthy. This 1934 study compared the records of different institutions about identical Illinois prisoners to find the inconsistencies in the reporting of nativity and other characteristics (Sutherland and Van Vechten, 1934). The rate of inconsistency for place of birth was a staggering 10.3% (Sutherland and Van Vechten, 1934, 15). Some, but not all, police departments record the immigrant status that they arrest (Van Vechten, 1941, 140), and of the ones that do, they cannot usually secure the country of origin nor the immigrant status of the parents (Wickersham Commission, 1931, 13). Frequently police records do not discern between legal and unauthorized immigrants, making it difficult for studies that focus on unauthorized immigrants (Light and Miller, 2017, 2).

Because criminal statistics are so complex and have many caveats to its usage, scholars can be tempted to oversimplify the complexity to make it easier to understand. One study describes this complexity:

“A first task, then, seems to be to appraise the facts. Unfortunately, these are extremely elusive, partly because of limitations inherent in all criminal statistics, and partly due to technical difficulties in comparing criminal statistics with population statistics. The discussion which follows is therefore not a

straightforward one, but it could not be simplified without serious risk of distortion” (Bottoms, 1973, 432).

Bottoms (1973) acknowledges the limitations of his data and the need to provide readers with a thorough and accurate explanation. Bottoms’ article goes into extensive detail to clarify his work, which is rare compared to the other literature I surveyed. Oversimplification is also susceptible to happening in popular discourse and the media, when information on immigration and crime are translated from scholarly articles to the common person. With short, rapid news articles for easy consumption, as well as tweets and other social media posts, the complexity of the immigrant-crime nexus is not often able to be detailed. For example, if an article concludes that immigrants commit less crime than natives overall, but more homicides, this could spiral into assertions that immigrants commit more violent crimes than natives, and even that they commit more crime overall, completely ignoring the real conclusion and that immigrants could be overrepresented in the statistics. These oversimplifications can lead to erroneous public opinions with no empirical basis, fueling the misconceptions surrounding immigrants.

Scholars agree that systemic information about immigrants, their community, and the immigration process would be more reliable and simpler than criminal statistics, but this data does not currently exist (Mears, 2001, 7). Until then, criminal statistics remain the best practice, despite their limitations. The statistics simply require a critical awareness of their shortcomings. But in reality, political science literature often fails to incorporate data or uses manipulated data.

Failure to Use Data

In many fields, if an article did not have any supporting data, it would be immediately discounted. But when it comes to theories of the immigrant-crime relationship, lack of data is often accepted as the norm. Immigrant-crime research “has relied primarily on limited data and theorizing” (Mears, 2001, 1). Theories are often, quite literally, made by theorizing, or speculation without adequate justification. Mears (2001), as mentioned previously, found this problematic, and developed a criteria for an analytic framework to “provide a more explicit and systematic basis for assessing and guiding theory and research” (12-13). Mears asserts that there has not been enough scrutiny applied to theories, and he stresses the importance of incorporating units of analysis, crime rates, and different sources of data (Mears, 2001, 10, 12-13). Mears argues that scholars already have the ability to perform this kind of developed analysis when it comes to crime patterns in general, but that it has not been transferred to the topic of immigrant crime (Mears, 2001, 13).

The problem is usually not that the article forgoes data altogether--in fact, all but two of the 22 articles surveyed incorporated statistics and facts into their arguments--but that the data is used in places other than the theory section. For example, an article may use arrest rate data to establish that immigrants commit more or less crime than natives, but not any information to back the supporting theory. Theories are particularly prone to basis in stereotype because the author can appeal to logic instead of hard data. One article from the survey asserts a list of theories without any appeal to data:

“Before considering statistics let's see what we know. We know that these people [immigrants] were people who had the courage, the ambition, the hope to seek out a new life in a country of opportunity. That should be a credit point. We also know that these were people with different habits, different ideas, different

customs. But we must judge them by our laws. We must expect to find some criminality in the areas where legal and moral codes differed. We know also that few immigrants found legitimate success easy..." (Van Vechten, 1941, 139-140)

Van Vechten (1941) asserts the theories of culture conflict and opportunity structure. The first sentence is particularly telling; Van Vechten appeals to various commonly held beliefs. He does not even attempt to explain how he "knows" these things about immigrants, but saves statistics for other portions of his article. Van Vechten relies on the cultural construction of immigrants as seekers of the American Dream. He describes the expectation of culture conflict, but not any examples of it occurring in reality. Van Vechten lacks any proof of causation. Even if immigrants experience culture conflict or poverty, there must be proof that these factors cause immigrants to turn to crime, and that they do so at a higher rate than natives experiencing similar problems. The same assertion of "we know" continues sixteen years later. Elliott (1957) supports the theory of culture clash, arguing that "we know" that immigrants have experienced "major adjustment problems" (190). Here there is the same issue of causation.

One reason that a political scientist could opt to not use data in the theory section is because the theory is an afterthought to a study. Theories are frequently not introduced until the discussion section or the conclusion, rather than being the main purpose. South (1987) analyzes the social consequences of immigration including crime, and does not discuss any theories until the small discussion section on the second to last page. He writes, "Although the precise mechanisms through which in-migration influences rates of suicide, crime, and divorce cannot be addressed with these data, the most commonly suggested explanation is that migration disrupts social relationships

and consequently reduces the degree of social integration...future research might profitably attempt to construct explicit measures of social integration” (South, 1987, 15). South admits that he has not collected sufficient data to advance a theoretical framework and he calls attention to the need for future research. This is preferable to advancing a theory without basis as Van Vechten and Elliott do, but South still emphasizes a theory merely because it is “commonly suggested.” This is problematic because the relationship between immigration and crime is often formed by “continual iteration rather than by empirical research” (Kinman and Lee, 1966, 8). Even though South addresses the lack of support for social integration, his utterance of it further cements it into the public memory and contributes to misconceptions around immigration and crime.

If data is necessary to substantiate a theory, and if a form of sound analysis exists to evaluate immigrant crime theories, then why is it not consistently used? Immigrant-crime theories are unique compared to other kinds of theoretical frameworks in that they are often grounded in popular stereotypes (Lee and Martinez, 2009, 487). The persistent myth of the Criminal Immigrant remains common among academics (Lee and Martinez, 2009, 15), and could influence the application of methods and data. In addition, experts may leave discussions of theory to the end because they are preoccupied with whether immigrants commit more or less crime, not the “why.” This is tempting because the “why” is more elusive and harder to prove. The culture of researchers may very well be that theoretical research is less important and worthy of investment than empirical.

Data Manipulation

The act of including data is not necessarily a magical solution to the aforementioned problems. Data has a history of being manipulated to favor nativist ends. The work of the United States Immigration Commission is a prime example. The Immigration Commission, or Dillingham Commission, was formed in 1907 during congressional deliberations over a literacy test for new immigrant arrivals (Pula, 1980, 7-8). The Commission lasted four years, and was composed of three Senators, three Representatives, and three presidentially appointed “experts” (Pula, 8). Although presented as bipartisan group, the most influential members were the all immigrant restrictionists. These were the restrictionist expert Jeremiah Jenkins, fervent restrictionist Senator Henry Cabot Lodge, and the moderate restrictionist and chairman Senator William Dillingham (Pula, 14). Members were also pressured to form restrictionist conclusions by lobbyists from the Immigrant Restriction League (Pula, 15).

With this composition, the Commission would be hard pressed to collect and present impartial data. The Commission’s data collection process relied on the work of its own investigators, disregarding the findings of other governmental organizations like the federal census and state bureaus, and it did not hold any public hearings (Pula, 16). The Commission released forty-two volumes on a variety of topics relating to immigration (Pula, 8). The report that I reviewed in the literature survey refers to “statistics” as well as “apparent” facts without providing a citation for the data’s origin (Immigration Commission, 1910, 25). In the end, the conclusions of the Committee affirmed restrictionist beliefs (Pula, 1980, 8). The Commission created a distinction

between “old immigrants” and the undesirable “new” ones from southern and eastern Europe (Pula, 1980, 6, 16). This distinction caused the Commission to sanction the stereotyping of new immigrants, giving clout to the argument of their moral, social, and economic differences from native Americans (Pula, 8). The issuance of a government report carried a certain weight, and had a lasting impact on Americans, legislators, and scholars (Pula, 1980, 8). The Commission’s results influenced Congress to pass literacy test legislation, overpowering President Wilson’s veto, and the results continued to be cited even thirty years later (Stofflet, 1941). It has also been open to criticism by scholars of the period: “The material available or secured by the commission was, however, very meager” (Abbott, 1916, 122), and scholars more recently (Pula, 1980). Abbott (1916) turned to other data sources instead, such as the Massachusetts Commission on Immigration and Chicago Council Committee on Crime (Abbott, 120).

In terms of immigrant crime, the Commission had complex and contradictory conclusions. In one report it stated that there was not sufficient information to reach a conclusion (Abbott, 1916, 119). Another said that “Immigrants are less prone to commit crime than are native Americans” (Van Vechten, 1941, 141), and yet another that immigrants commit a greater proportion of “the more serious crimes of homicide, blackmail, and robbery, as well as the least serious offenses” (Immigration Commission, 1910, 25). In any case, the Commission did not have a strong restrictionist response to the immigrant-crime debate. It is interesting that the Commission did not compare the crime rate of the old and new immigrants. It is also noteworthy that the Commission did not find sufficient data when they had their own team of investigators--the Commission must not have prioritized the topic of crime.

Data can also be biased in the opposite way. Eighteen years after the Dillingham Commission, President Herbert Hoover created the National Commission on Law Observance and Enforcement, or Wickersham Commission, to evaluate the criminal justice system. In 1931 it released its “Report on Crime and the Foreign Born,” concluding that immigrants commit “considerably fewer” crimes than the native born (Wickersham Commission, 1931, 400). The Wickersham Commission stated that any assertions of a difference in criminality between immigrants and natives was fabricated, and merely based on the religious, cultural, and linguistic differences between the two groups (Wickersham Commission, 1931, 1). These conclusions are much more radical than the Immigration Commission’s. The Wickersham Commission has been criticized for having a “pro-alien bias,” or going out of its way to portray immigrants in a good light in its findings (Taft, 1933, 70). This may be from working closely with immigrants for many years and becoming attached, influencing how they interpret the facts (Taft, 1933, 70).

In immigrant-crime literature, there is a history of scholars accepting theories into the canon without being properly vetted. Alternatively, there may appear to be supporting evidence, but it could have been intentionally or unintentionally misconstrued for biased ends. These occurrences substantially increase the likelihood of misleading and inaccurate theories becoming popular. Demographic Factors, Opportunity Structure, Acculturation, Culture Conflict, and Social Disorganization are just a few examples.

Section 4: Theories in Political Discourse

Immigrant-crime literature has at times had an influence on political discourse. When discussing immigration policy, politicians often draw support from recent studies. For example, President Trump has cited studies from the Center for Immigration Studies to justify his border wall and other restrictive policies (@realdonaldtrump, 6/24/16, 3/13/18). Similarly, in an effort to combat violent crime, former Attorney General Jeff Sessions cited a study from University of California Riverside on immigrant crime in sanctuary cities (Sessions, 2017), but received pushback from the study researchers who accused Sessions of mischaracterizing their findings (Valverde, 2017). In either event, there is a clear relationship between empirical immigrant-crime research and political discourse. But the connection between theoretical immigrant-crime research and political discourse warrants further investigation. To do this, I compared the five dominant theories that I previously identified to the rhetoric of two prominent, contemporary political entities, President Donald Trump and the Democratic Party.

Donald Trump

The analysis consisted of an examination of all of President Trump's tweets on immigration from the date he announced his campaign, June 16, 2015, until December 31st 2018. I found these tweets using a database called Trump Twitter Archive which was created by Brendan Brown and is updated hourly. I ran a term search for "immigra," so that it would pick up tweets that mention immigration as well as immigrants. It yielded 202 results. I initially planned to research the top ten most

popular tweets by number of Twitter “favorites,” but found that the most favorited were usually the most recent tweets, since arguably President Trump gets more followers every day as the population increases and new users join the platform. I decided to analyze all 202 tweets, and since each tweet is short, that was a manageable number. I examined each speech by marking the adjectives that President Trump uses to describe immigration and immigrants, and marked the words and phrases that he frequently uses. In the following analysis, I do not cite every tweet, but rather the general trends and those that are most representative of President Trump’s analysis.

The first finding is that President Trump almost always uses the word “illegal” to preface the words immigrant, immigrants, and immigration. Every time that President Trump refers to unauthorized immigration, he uses the word “illegal.” President Trump focuses his immigration-focused tweets on illegal immigration, or approximately 57% of his tweets. Roughly 23% of his tweets target the nation’s “immigration laws,” or use another synonym like immigration policies, reform, system, bill, or legislation. As described in the terminology section, the word “illegal” carries a negative connotation (Haynes et al., 2016, 144) versus the word “undocumented” that is often used by liberals (135).

President Trump also links crime to immigration in his tweets. He often mentions specific sensational cases of crime committed by illegal immigrants, such as the Kate Steinle murder in San Francisco (@realdonaldtrump, 11/30/17, 7/13/15, 7/4/15, 7/3/15), a California shooting of a police officer at a traffic stop (12/27/18), a shooting at Washington State (9/25/16), a drunk driver who killed Sarah Root in Nebraska (5/6/16), a car accident that killed linebacker Edwin Jackson (2/6/18), the

murder of a 64 year old California woman (8/10/15), and the murder of Jamiel Shaw II (12/1/15). It is important to note that not all of these crimes occurred while Trump was in office, including Shaw's murder which happened in 2008, and Steinle's murder which was in 2015. Additionally, President Trump specifically mentions immigrant crime in 8% of his tweets, often citing drug crime, gangs, and in particular the international gang MS-13.

President Trump's concentration on illegality and crime invokes what are called "media frames" (Haynes et al., 2016, 29). Frames are cognitive frameworks that help individuals understand the world (Haynes et al., 29-30), and consist of the key words used and the general tone, be it positive or negative (36). Frames matter because they influence public opinion (Haynes et al., 29). Haynes et al. (2016) was published before Trump was elected so they did not analyze him, but a few of their frames accurately describe his tactics. The focus on illegality invokes what Haynes et al. (2016) calls the Rule of Law frame, which emphasizes the lack of authorization of certain immigrants to enter the country (Haynes et al., 158). President Trump singles out the select group of immigrants that do not have legal standing, making it an easier argument for their deportation.

President Trump's tweets also invoke the Criminality frame (Haynes et al., 16). The Criminality frame is often used in conservative discourse, and refers to arguments that connect immigrants to crime and violence (Haynes et al., 16). In this frame, immigrants are presented as a crisis that demand immediate state action (Haynes et al., 16), often associating immigrants with the proliferation of certain extreme crimes such as murder and gang violence (Haynes et al., 63). Donald Trump goes out of his way in

his tweets to cite specific instances of violent and reckless crimes. Instead of drug possession and driving under the influence, he mentions drunk driving that results in death and MS-13 drug crime. The importance of these media frames is that they are strategically used to sway the public's thoughts and emotions (Haynes et al., 18); Trump's invocation of Criminality and the Rule of Law are not accidents.

It is also interesting to consider the frames that President Trump does not use. Haynes et al. (2016) also describe the Familial frame, which centers arguments around keeping families intact (63), and the Child frame that incorporates how children will benefit to make policies more favorable, since the public widely supports the needs of children (90). President Trump's tweets rarely mention immigrant children. Only 3% of his tweets mention children at all, and of the one third of the tweets that do, they say that immigrant parents are "using" their children (@realdonaldtrump, 7/11/18, 7/29/18). This places blame on the parents, but implies that the children are innocent. Only once does he tweet "illegal immigrant children" (12/2/2015)--most often the children are free from any assertion of criminality, illegality, or blame. President Trump often portrays himself in his tweets as in favor of policies that benefit immigrant like Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA). President Trump depicts DACA as a bipartisan policy, tweeting that both "Republicans and Democrats are working hard" on it (2/15/18), and that if it is not renewed, that is not his fault but rather that of "Cryin' Chuck Schumer" (1/26/18). Donald Trump does once invoke the familial frame by blaming Democrats for "forcing the breakup of families at the Border" (6/15/18), however he does not make family separation a prominent issue and never tweets about it again. Instead, Donald Trump prefers the traditionally conservative frames of Rule of Law and Criminality.

Both these frames are negative, since they invoke negative emotions like fear, sadness, and anger (Haynes et al., 36). Negative frames are often more persuasive than positive frames (Haynes et al., 158), which could explain President Trump's heavy reliance on them as he seeks to accomplish his comprehensive immigration reform and border wall.

President Trump's use of media frames implicitly affirms and negates various theoretical frameworks. The Acculturation or Second Generation theory described earlier emphasizes the criminal tendencies of second generation immigrant children who have acculturated to the material culture of the United States. As evidenced by his tweets, President Trump does not seem to support this theory. Although he focuses on criminality, President Trump raises no concerns of the criminal tendencies of the second-generation immigrant children who will be born and raised in the United States, nor of the first-generation immigrant children who accompany their parents, even though these high crime rates would be a further argument for strict immigration and deportation laws. In regards to Demographic Factors, Trump makes no note of the age or gender of the people who tend to immigrate. Neither does Trump mention the Opportunity Structure an immigrant has, as to enumerate these mitigating factors would likely illicit sympathy.

In addition, there is no clear reference to Culture Conflict. The crimes that Trump identifies in his tweets, like murder and drug trafficking, are (most likely) not areas where the legal or moral code would differ between an immigrant's home country and the United States. This is another tactic to reduce sympathy, since it increases the likelihood that an immigrant intentionally committed a crime, instead of doing so out of ignorance or confusion. Finally, President Trump also does not appear to support Social

Disorganization Theory, or that the process of immigration disrupts community support, and therefore community buffers against crime. This theory may not be appealing to Trump because it implies that there is a period between when a person immigrates and when they turn to crime, since there must be time for community control to break down. Trump's tweets stress the urgency of the immigrant crime situation, so he opted to present crime as immediate instead.

Surprisingly, Trump's rhetoric does not reflect the influence of any of the five dominant theories, even though all five theories are justifications for higher rates of immigrant crime—the assertion that Trump is seeking to make. While these theories may be popular in political science literature, that does not mean that it will be accepted into Donald Trump's discourse, or the media in general. It was therefore necessary to investigate if Trump used any theories at all to support his arguments, or whether he opted not to. It is entirely possible that Trump would forgo theory altogether, in order to keep his arguments on immigration and crime simple and readily digestible for his base; instead of explaining the details of why immigrants commit crime, he could merely state—and repeat—that they do.

However, it does appear that Donald Trump's rhetoric and media framing does support a theory, one that has not been mentioned thus far: Importation theory. Importation theory asserts that immigrants commit more crimes than natives because some immigrants decide to migrate “with the explicit objective of engaging in criminal activity within the receiving country” (Wortley, 2009, 352). With his simplistic statements like “OPEN BORDERS = CRIME” (7/27/18), President Trump paints a picture of immigrants entering the country already with criminal objectives. He

represents immigrants as so inherently connected to crime that the only way to stop immigrant crime is to stop the immigrant at its source: the border. Importation theory presents the United States as the victim of immigrant crime that freely flows through its borders, and gives no sympathy to the perpetrators. Because this theory accuses immigrants of criminality without defining the mechanism, it is arguably the most racist and nativist theory produced by the Academy. The importation model has suffered extensive scrutiny and has been mainly dismissed by scholars, although it does have a history of being promoted by U.S. government agencies (Williams et al., 2011, 302). For example, it was once used to explain the origin of organized crime in the United States, however that claim has been largely debunked (Ubah, 2007). Trump therefore uses the logic of a simplistic, unsupported theory, helping to keep his tweets easy to understand for his supporters.

What Donald Trump says as President of the United States matters. As President Theodore Roosevelt famously said: “I suppose my critics will call that preaching, but I have got such a bully pulpit!” (A.W.M., 1909). The position of president is unique in its far-reaching platform. Political scientist Richard Neustadt (1991) has quantified presidential strength as the power to persuade its constituencies such as Congress, the media, and the public. Because of this, presidential rhetoric and media frames it uses, as well as the theoretical frameworks of immigrant-crime that it supports are enormously important in its ability to shape public opinion. The words of Donald Trump on immigration are also interesting as they serve as a reflection of the national sentiment on the deeply contested issue of immigration.

Democratic Party Response

The other side of the political spectrum also has a distinctive discourse on immigration and crime. Although the Democratic party does not have a leader who is a direct comparator to Donald Trump nor such a defining Twitter platform, the party has issued a few coordinated statements on the topic of immigration. I examined the full text of the Democratic response to President Trump's immigration speech delivered by House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Minority Leader Chuck Schumer in January of 2019, the full text of the Democratic response to President Trump's State of the Union Address delivered by Stacey Abrams in February of 2019, and the Democratic Party's statement on Immigration Reform on its website. As with President Trump's tweets, I examined each statement by notating the adjectives that are used to describe immigration and immigrants, as well as any common themes, and the overall tone. Three formal statements may not have the same sensational quality as rapid tweets, but should give a general idea of the liberal approach to the immigrant-crime discussion and the theories that are invoked.

The first finding is that all three statements invoke the Familial Frame--the very frame that Trump evades. Abrams accuses the Trump Administration of "caging children and tearing families apart" (Abrams, 2019), and the Democratic party platform states in three places that families should be kept "together" not "torn apart" or "separated" (Democratic Party, 2019). Invoking the image of the family is relatable to Americans and allows for empathy. Implicit in this imagery is that immigrants are loving people and not violent criminals. The criminal and the "family man" are inherently opposed. Pelosi explicitly states in her speech that the immigrants at the

border are “women and children” and do not pose a “security threat” (Pelosi and Schumer, 2019). The popular image of a criminal is a solitary adult male, so Pelosi is trying to invoke age and gender to disrupt the Trump Administration’s criminalization.

At the same time, it is unclear if the Democratic Party is referring to legal or unauthorized immigrants when using the Familial Frame. President Trump is careful to almost always state “illegal immigrants” when discussing criminals, not immigrants as a whole. None of the Democratic statements specify as to the legal status of immigrants, except at one point where Schumer states that “we can welcome legal immigrants and refugees without compromising safety and security” (Pelosi and Schumer, 2019). Schumer places immigrants into two groups: either the sympathetic refugee, or the legal immigrant. It is unclear what the Democratic Party’s stance to unauthorized immigration and crime. This is likely because it is a more contentious issue, and the Party wanted to avoid conflict.

Despite all of the efforts of the Democratic Party to decriminalize the image of immigrants and represent them as families, it still targets immigrants with criminal backgrounds. The Democratic Party platform states that immigration enforcement should be “focused on those with criminal records” (2019). This reinforces the notion that the Criminal Immigrants exists, and that (certain) immigrants are not safe for society and must be removed. Similar to Trump, the Democratic Party stigmatizes the criminal. It advocates “targeting criminals--not families” (Democratic Party, 2019), as if the two are opposed. It does not allow for the visibility of a felon with a family, nor does it explain that a criminal record can simply mean a non-violent misdemeanor (Cook, 2003, 298).

Because all five of the dominant theories are explanations for why immigrants would commit disproportionate crime, I did not expect to find any reference to them in the Democratic Party's rhetoric. Instead, I anticipated that the Democratic party, as the adverse party to President Trump's, would take the opposite theoretical stance. Therefore, since President Trump's rhetoric supports Importation Theory, the Democratic Party should support Self-Selection Theory, or the approximate opposite to the Importation Model. Self-Selection argues that immigrants commit less crime than natives do because those who choose to immigrate, and who succeed at doing so, are a uniquely capable and qualified group of individuals (Kubrin, 2013, 445).

Since the immigration process is often difficult and strenuous, those who immigrate are not a cross-section of the population, but rather are a "self-selected" group that is by nature less likely to commit crime (Kubrin, 2013, 445). To put it simply, Importation Theory argues that immigrants choose to immigrate because they are bad people who want to commit crime, while Self-Selection asserts that immigrants are exceptionally good people who want to succeed in a new country.

Although Self-Selection Theory is the logical opposite, I found no evidence of it in the Democratic texts that I reviewed. Abrams states that the nation is "made stronger by the presence of immigrants" (2019), which counters the Importation Theory notion that criminal immigrants will harm the country, but Abrams does not go so far to explain the good character or perseverance of the people who decide to immigrate. In none of the statements do the Democrats provide anecdotes of law-abiding immigrants to counter Trump's crime highlights. It is as if the Democratic Party admits that not all immigrants are good, and that some do in fact commit crime.

While President Trump presents the nation as ridden by immigrant crime, the Democratic Party does not paint an alternate image, rather just different policy outcomes.

Discussion

One-hundred years of scholarly research has not yielded one single sophisticated argument about immigration and crime. The five dominant theories examined in this paper are all explanations for why immigrants commit a disproportionate amount of crime, when we know that the opposite is true. This should serve as an alarm bell to researchers: they have not yet resolved the nexus of immigration and crime. Too often, political scientists have fallen into the hypothesis that is the most attractive--that immigration is positively related to crime (Kinman and Lee, 1966, 8). The hypothesis is clear and logical, and would explain why crime is higher in the United States than most European countries (Kinman and Lee, 1966, 8). But the convenience of this hypothesis is outweighed by the benefits of crafting theories based on contemporary realities.

Theories on immigration and crime matter because they have real policy implications that have yet to be utilized. Once more theories explaining a negative relationship between immigration and crime are developed and sufficiently tested, it should provide a clear picture of what inspires the low propensity towards crime in immigrant communities, and conversely, what increases the crime rates of the native-born. Policymakers would then be able to pinpoint the locus of crime in the United States, and create the appropriate crime-reduction policies. Crime reduction is a net benefit for everyone, regardless of immigrant status. It is the theories themselves that make these policies possible, since only knowing that immigrants commit less crime causes policies to be too broad, or possibly too narrow (Mears, 2001, 11). In addition, if theories remain insufficiently tested like they are right now, policymakers run the risk

of basing their work on the wrong theory, and their policies could become part of the problem instead of the solution (Wortley, 2009, 356).


The second reason why theories matter is that they have some salience in political discourse. President Donald Trump, whether intentionally or not, makes use of Importation Theory to justify immigration reform and tougher border security. President Trump presents the United States as the victim of immigrant crime, and asserts that the country will never be safe in the presence of immigrants, especially those without authorization. Importation Theory is inaccurate because it justifies a higher crime rate for immigrants, but Trump is able to invoke it without consequence because there is no vetted, nationally accepted theory of immigration and crime to replace it with. With the development of theoretical research, the one or two most accurate theories should emerge and be available to the Democratic Party for political usage. Hopefully, this would recenter the immigrant-crime political debate around facts, data, and vetted research—instead of sensational media frames, as it now stands.

Throughout the 21st Century, political scientists have noted time and time again that there is insufficient theoretical research on immigration and crime (Mears, 2001; Wortley, 2009; Lee and Martinez, 2009; Kubrin, 2013). It is time for researchers to accept that there has been sufficient research to establish that both immigrants as a whole and unauthorized immigrants commit the same amount of crime as natives if not less, and that the process of immigration does not increase crime on a macro-level. Further research should attempt to evaluate the existing theories that explain a negative relationship between immigration and crime to determine what theory or combination of theories is the most accurate. This should be done in accordance with Mears' (2001)

standards of methodology. In addition, a more comprehensive study of immigrant-crime literature over the last century is warranted to confirm my results of the five dominant theories, and to raise questions over the disappearance of certain theories and popularity of others. Finally, no piece of immigrant-crime literature has examined the connection between theory and political discourse, as this thesis initiates. Further attempts should be made to demonstrate the practical implications of immigrant-crime literature as seen in everyday political life.


Appendix




A few of President Trump's notable tweets on immigration and crime, as referenced in the Theories in Political Discourse section.


 **Donald J. Trump** ✓
@realDonaldTrump [Follow](#) ▾

So disgraceful that a person illegally in our country killed @Colts linebacker Edwin Jackson. This is just one of many such preventable tragedies. We must get the Dems to get tough on the Border, and with illegal immigration, FAST!

5:32 AM - 6 Feb 2018


32,080 Retweets 132,193 Likes 




 31K  32K  132K

 **Donald J. Trump** ✓
@realDonaldTrump [Follow](#) ▾

HOUSE REPUBLICANS SHOULD PASS THE STRONG BUT FAIR IMMIGRATION BILL, KNOWN AS GOODLATTE II, IN THEIR AFTERNOON VOTE TODAY, EVEN THOUGH THE DEMS WON'T LET IT PASS IN THE SENATE. PASSAGE WILL SHOW THAT WE WANT STRONG BORDERS & SECURITY WHILE THE DEMS WANT OPEN BORDERS = CRIME. WIN!

5:39 AM - 27 Jun 2018

21,069 Retweets 95,233 Likes 

 25K  21K  95K



Donald J. Trump ✓

@realDonaldTrump

Follow



It's the Democrats fault, they won't give us the votes needed to pass good immigration legislation. They want open borders, which breeds horrible crime. Republicans want security. But I am working on something - it never ends!

6:41 AM - 20 Jun 2018

21,326 Retweets 90,616 Likes



32K 21K 91K



Donald J. Trump ✓

@realDonaldTrump

Follow



Any deaths of children or others at the Border are strictly the fault of the Democrats and their pathetic immigration policies that allow people to make the long trek thinking they can enter our country illegally. They can't. If we had a Wall, they wouldn't even try! The two.....

10:30 AM - 29 Dec 2018

28,430 Retweets 120,592 Likes



80K 28K 121K

Figures

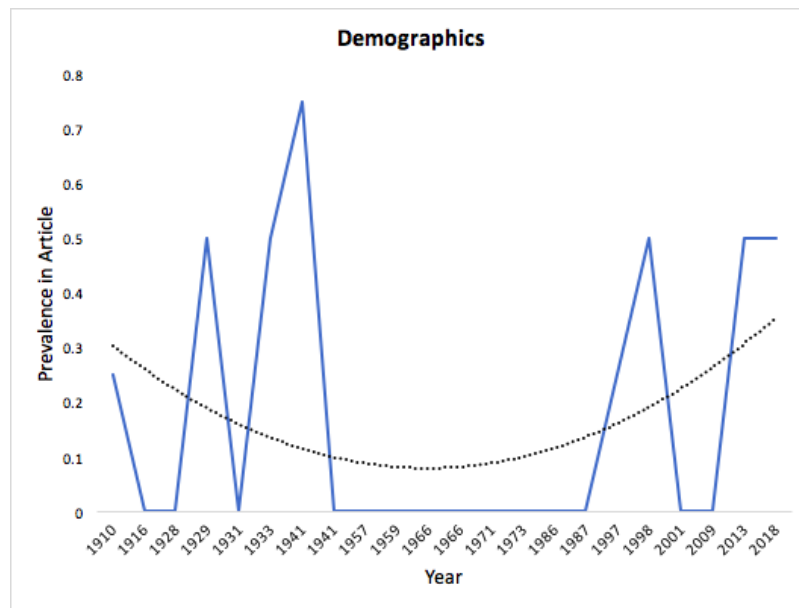


Figure 1: Demographic Factors

Graph of the popularity of the Demographic Factors theory over the last one-hundred years as conducted in the literature survey, where $n=22$.

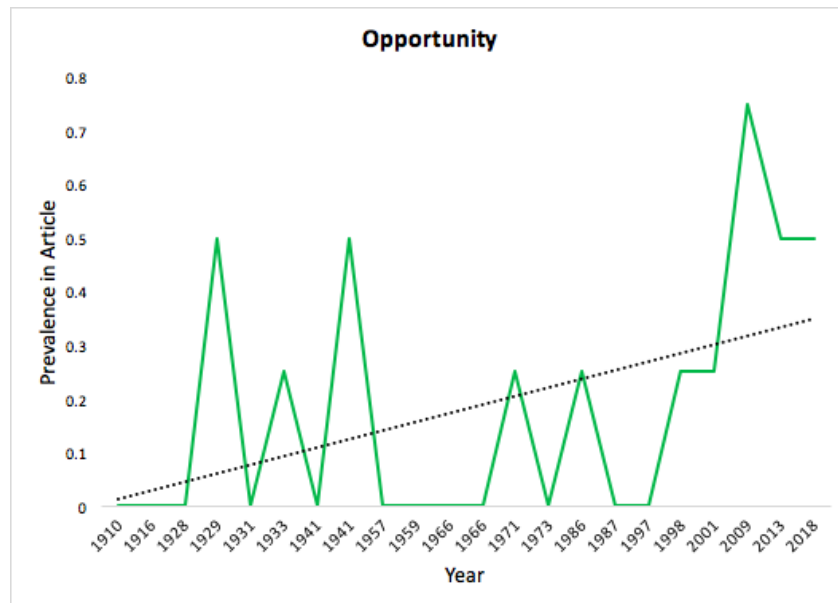


Figure 2: Opportunity Structure

Graph of the popularity of the Opportunity Structure theory over the last one-hundred years as conducted in the literature survey, where n=22.

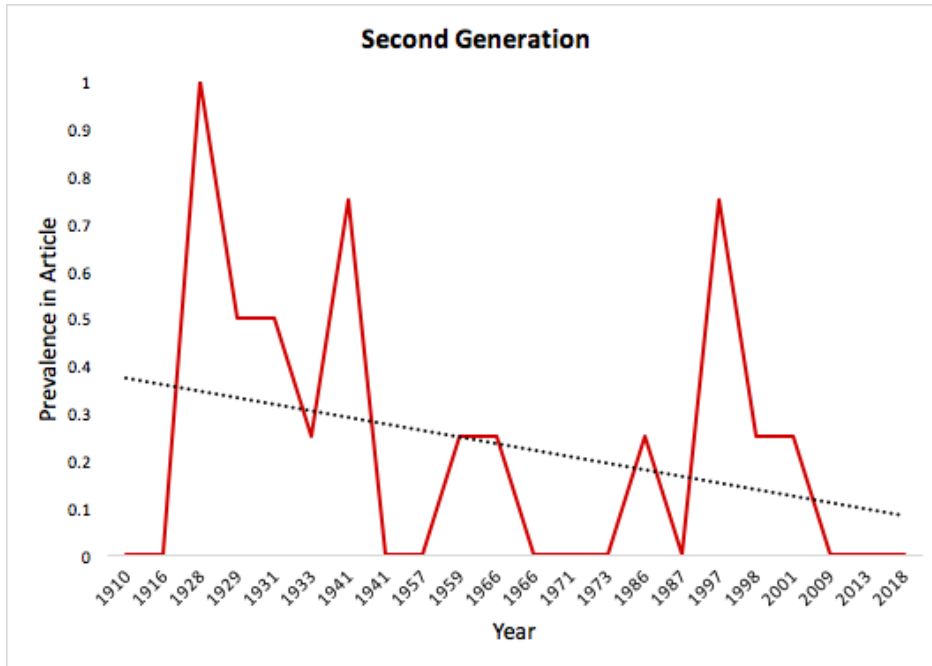


Figure 3: Acculturation/Second Generation

Graph of the popularity of the Acculturation/Second Generation theory over the last one-hundred years as conducted in the literature survey, where n=22.



Figure 4: Culture Conflict

Graph of the popularity of the Culture Conflict theory over the last one-hundred years as conducted in the literature survey, where n=22.

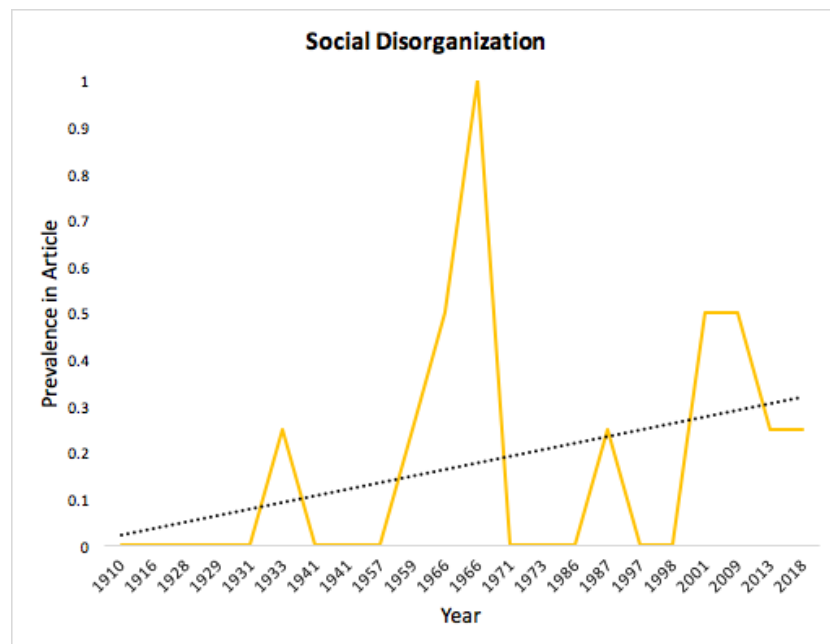


Figure 5: Social Disorganization

Graph of the popularity of the Culture Conflict theory, invented in the 1930s, over the last one-hundred years as conducted in the literature survey, where n=22.

Tables

Theory	Numerical Value
Not mentioned	0
One sentence	0.25
One paragraph	0.50
Full section	0.75
Main focus of article	1.00

Table delineating the values used to assess the popularity of a theory in an article in the literature survey.

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