Contrary to popular opinion, scholarly research has documented that immigrant communities are some of the safest places around. Studies repeatedly find that immigrant concentration is either negatively associated with neighborhood crime rates or not related to crime at all. But are immigrant neighborhoods always safer places? How does the larger community context within which immigrant neighborhoods are situated condition the immigration-crime relationship? Building on the existing literature, this study examines the relationship between immigrant concentration and violent crime across neighborhoods in Los Angeles and Chicago—two cities with significant and diverse immigrant populations. Of particular interest is whether neighborhoods with high levels of immigrant concentration that are situated within larger immigrant communities are especially likely to enjoy reduced crime rates. This was found to be the case in Chicago but not in Los Angeles, where neighborhoods with greater levels of immigrant concentration experienced higher, not lower, violent crime rates when located within larger immigrant communities. We speculate on the various factors that may account for the divergent findings.

Keywords: immigration, crime, neighborhoods, spatial analysis


Hiromi Ishizawa is an assistant professor of sociology at George Washington University. Her research interests are in social demography, immigration, and urban sociology. A current research project examines the effect of political context on various measures of immigrant integration.

NOTE: We thank John McDonald and Robert Sampson for comments on an earlier draft of the article. We are especially grateful to Ruth Peterson and Lauren Krivo for providing us with the data, which were prepared with funds from the National Science Foundation (SES-0080091).

DOI: 10.1177/0002716211431688
One of the most consistent findings to emerge from the criminological literature is that immigrants are less crime-prone than the native-born. Nearly a century of research documents this. In the early 1930s, the National Commission on Law Observance and Enforcement, also known as the Wickersham Commission, devoted an entire report to the topic of “Crime and the Foreign-Born,” analyzing the extent of their criminal involvement, their relations with the criminal justice system, and public attitudes toward the immigrant population and crime. The Commission reached the conclusion that, when controlling for age and gender, foreign-born persons committed proportionally fewer crimes than their native-born counterparts (National Commission on Law Observance and Enforcement 1931). Fast forward 70 years; this conclusion has not changed. In a 2000 review essay for the National Institute of Justice, Martinez and Lee (2000, 496) note, “[T]he major finding of a century of research on immigration and crime is that immigrants . . . nearly always exhibit lower crime rates than native groups.”

Although studies on the individual-level association between immigrant status and criminal offending are plentiful, there is a comparative shortage of research on the macro-level relationship between immigration and crime, including studies published at the neighborhood, city, and metropolitan levels (Ousey and Kubrin 2009). This is problematic because as Reid et al. (2005, 764) point out, “Although micro-level research may indicate that immigrants have a lower level of offending than native-born persons, such findings do not take into account the ecological impacts of immigration processes that may influence aggregate rates of criminal offending.” In other words, immigration is an aggregate-level phenomenon whose effects may extend far beyond the argument that immigrants are more (or less) crime-prone than nonimmigrants. Immigration affects demographic, economic, and social structures in ways that may impact overall crime rates, net of any differences in the individual-level offending of immigrants (Ousey and Kubrin 2009). It is entirely possible, therefore, that immigrants are less criminal than nonimmigrants but that immigration could create crime by disrupting social conditions in areas (thereby increasing crime among the foreign-born and native-born alike). These considerations underscore the necessity of differentiating between an immigrant-crime and immigration-crime nexus and of distinguishing between two key questions: (1) Are immigrants more likely than the native-born to commit crime? and (2) Do immigrants adversely affect the crime rate? They also suggest caution in generalizing from one unit of analysis (e.g., individual immigrants) to another (e.g., groups of immigrants) (Mears 2002, 285).

Recently, to fill the void in the literature, there has been a proliferation of aggregate-level studies on the immigration-crime link. Most are conducted at the neighborhood level (Desmond and Kubrin 2009; M. Lee and Martinez 2002; M. Lee, Martinez, and Rosenfeld 2001; Martinez, Lee, and Nielsen 2004; Martinez, Stowell, and Cancino 2005; Nielsen, Lee, and Martinez 2005; Sampson, Morenoff, and Raudenbush 2005; Stowell and Martinez 2007). These studies assess whether, and to what extent, levels of immigrant concentration are associated with neighborhood crime rates, controlling on a range of factors known to be linked to crime.
The basic conclusion to emerge from this research parallels what is found at the individual level: immigrant concentration is negatively associated with crime rates or not associated with crime at all.

In the current study, we build on the existing neighborhood literature by incorporating the larger community context into an assessment of the immigration-crime relationship. We ask, How does the larger community context within which immigrant neighborhoods are situated condition the relationship between immigration and crime? More specifically, our goal is to determine whether neighborhoods with high levels of immigrant concentration that are situated within larger immigrant communities are especially likely to enjoy reduced crime rates. We examine these issues in neighborhoods in Chicago and Los Angeles—two cities with significant and diverse immigrant populations. Below we elaborate on the hypothesized immigrant concentration–neighborhood crime relationship and discuss why there might be added benefit for those neighborhoods situated within larger immigrant communities.

**Conceptual Framework**

Despite popular perception that immigration and crime go hand in hand, there are sound reasons to believe that immigration impacts social life in ways that decrease crime rates. Here we review perspectives that suggest that more immigration leads to less neighborhood crime. Included are arguments on immigrant selection effects, formal social control, immigration revitalization, employment and ethnic entrepreneurship, and family structure. The perspectives vary both in terms of whether the behavior of immigrants, natives, or both groups is in question and in terms of the implications regarding added benefits to those neighborhoods embedded within larger immigrant communities, as opposed to those more spatially isolated.

**Immigrant selection effects**

Immigrants do not represent a cross-section of the sending population but instead are a self-selected group. Typically, immigrants who decide to come to the United States do so for the opportunity to improve their life chances. According to selectivity theory, then, they are more likely to have low criminal propensities (Stowell et al. 2009). That is, the self-selection of migrants into the United States in search of work and economic advancement suggests they may have strong incentives to remain law-abiding and to avoid interactions with the criminal justice system. According to Tonry (1997, 21), “Many immigrants come to the U.S. to pursue economic and educational opportunities not available in their home countries and to build better lives for themselves and their families. Most are hard-working, ready to defer gratification in the interest of longer-term advancement, and therefore likely to be conformist and to behave.” Because a criminal conviction can
result in deportation for immigrants, including lawful permanent residents, it is argued that those who wish to stay in the country have a greater stake in conformity. It is also argued that the deterrent effect of the threat of deportation can make immigrants less likely to commit crimes (Butcher and Piehl 1998, 672). Such arguments offer reasons to anticipate an inverse relationship between immigrant concentration and neighborhood crime rates.

**Formal social control**

A formal social control argument considers the public response to immigration, particularly increasing immigration, and the effect this response may have on crime in the community via enhanced formal social control efforts (Öusey and Kubrin 2009). Moral panic theory is instructive here. A moral panic occurs when “a condition, episode, person or group of persons emerges to become defined as a threat to societal values and interest; its nature is presented in a stylized and stereotypical fashion by the mass media and politicians” (Cohen 1972, 9). Moral panic theory has made significant inroads into immigration research, especially in light of exaggerated and turbulent reactions to “outsiders” (Welch 2002). Consistent with this line of reasoning, it is argued that increased immigration is often accompanied by rising fear among local residents that crime is worsening in the community, even when it is not. Rising fear and concern may prompt residents to urge public officials to “do something” about the worsening crime problem. The most frequent response is a crackdown on crime through the deployment of more police officers to apprehend criminals. According to deterrence theory, this should result in less crime as residents—the foreign-born and native-born alike—adjust to the perception they are more likely to get caught and punished for committing a crime. Indeed, studies on the deterrent effect of police size find support for this argument (see Kubrin et al. [2010] for a review). In short, immigration may be negatively associated with crime rates across neighborhoods due to deterrence resulting from enhanced formal regulation by institutions such as the police.

**Immigration revitalization**

Social disorganization theory, as originally conceived, theorized a positive association between immigrant concentration and neighborhood crime rates. This was due to several reasons. First, it was argued that immigration to an area causes residential turnover, or the frequent movement of populations in and out of a community. Residential turnover weakens social ties, as residents are unable to create dense friendship networks and friendships are short-lived. This leads to decreases in informal social control, or the capacity of a group to regulate its members according to mutually desired goals—such as the desire to live in a safe and crime-free environment. Examples of informal social control include the monitoring of spontaneous play groups among children, a willingness to intervene to prevent
acts such as truancy and street-corner “hanging” by teenage peer groups, and the confrontation of persons who are disturbing public space (Sampson, Raudenbush, and Earls 1997). Weak ties and decreased informal social control, in turn, lead to heightened crime rates.

Immigration is also associated with crime according to social disorganization theory because it generates racial and ethnic heterogeneity, which, like residential mobility, can undermine the strength and salience of informal social control in communities. Here it is argued that in areas with diverse racial and ethnic groups living in close proximity, interaction between members will be lower than in racially and ethnically homogeneous communities. Reasons point to cultural differences between the groups, language incompatibility, and the fact that individuals prefer members of their own race or ethnicity to members of different races or ethnicities. As a result, residents will be less likely to look out for one another and will not take as great an interest in their neighbors’ activities, resulting in less informal social control and, ultimately, more crime.

Recently, scholars have challenged these claims, arguing instead that immigration can revitalize communities and actually strengthen informal social control. Martinez (2006, 10) notes, “Contemporary scholars are now more open to the possibility that an influx of immigrants into disadvantaged and high-crime communities may encourage new forms of social organization and adaptive social structures. Such adaptations may mediate the negative effects of economic deprivation and various forms of demographic heterogeneity (ethnic, cultural, social) on formal and informal social control, thereby decreasing crime.” Referred to as the immigration revitalization thesis, the argument is that far from being a criminogenic force, immigration contributes to the viability of urban areas, especially those that have experienced significant population decline (M. Lee et al. 2001, 564; see also Portes and Stepick 1993). This revitalization is due to several factors, including strong familial and neighborhood institutions and enhanced job opportunities associated with ethnic enclave economies (Reid et al. 2005, 762).

**Employment and ethnic entrepreneurship**

Immigrant communities may have less crime because they can provide residents with employment opportunities that might otherwise not be available to them. A substantial literature on ethnic enclaves finds that in such communities, immigrants are able to secure employment that yields better returns to their human capital than would be found in the secondary labor market outside of the area (Waters and Eschbach 1995, 438). Although the jobs may be low-wage, they help offset poverty, a strong correlate of crime.

In some immigrant communities, there is a high degree of institutional completeness, where out-group contact is minimized and the community is largely self-sufficient. Often in these neighborhoods, a thriving business district not only keeps shop owners and their family members employed, but it constitutes an ethnic economy that can serve the entire community (Aguilar-San Juan 2005, 46).
These ethnic economies have become increasingly critical over the past several decades of deindustrialization, when the loss of blue-collar/manufacturing jobs has served to increase employment difficulties for racial and ethnic minorities. One result has been that some immigrants fare better in the labor force compared to native minorities, what Portes and Zhou (1992, 498) describe as the “peculiar American paradox of rising labor market marginalization of native-born blacks and Puerto Ricans, along with growing numbers and employment of third world immigrants.”

This is certainly the case among Latinos, who have relatively low levels of joblessness. Scholars note that Latinos have a strong attachment to the economy through low-paying but fairly stable jobs. As Martinez (2002, 133) explains, “Attachments to the world of work even through subsistence-paying jobs are part of the bond that fortifies Latino communities and helps them absorb the shock of widespread poverty.” Such integration into the labor force may help explain the relatively lower crime rates among immigrants in general and Latino immigrants in particular.

**Family structure**

A final perspective that posits a negative immigration-crime relationship suggests that immigration alters aggregate family and household structures in ways that strengthen informal social control and impede crime (Ousey and Kubrin 2009). This is because immigrants, on the whole, are more likely to have traditional intact, or two-parent, family structures. Lower divorce rates and more two-parent households reduce family disruption—a strong correlate of crime. To the extent that immigrants have greater intact family structures and corresponding pro-family cultural orientations, it is likely that neighborhoods with more immigrants will have less crime.

Findings from a recent study by Ousey and Kubrin (2009) support this argument, at least at the city level. In their study, they investigated the longitudinal relationship between immigration and violent crime across U.S. cities from 1980 to 2000. They first determined whether within-city, over-time change in immigration was associated with within-city change in violent crime. After finding that increases in immigration led to decreases in violent crime, they examined the efficacy of several alternative theories by assessing whether changes in demographic structure, economic deprivation, labor markets, illegal drug markets, police force capacity, and family structure could account for the observed longitudinal immigration-crime association. Their key finding is that the negative relationship between immigration and violent crime appears largely due to the fact that immigration is negatively associated with divorce and single-parent families, both of which are positively correlated with violent crime. In essence, this argument suggests that communities with high concentrations of immigrants will have lower crime rates due to less family disruption.

In sum, several perspectives offer sound reasons to anticipate that immigration impacts social life in ways that decrease crime rates in neighborhoods. From
these arguments and the findings of a small but growing literature at the neighborhood level, it logically follows that one would anticipate further benefits to those immigrant neighborhoods that are situated within larger immigrant communities, compared to those that are more spatially isolated. Although further crime reductions in such communities seem intuitively plausible, no research has actually tested this assumption. Here we build on the existing neighborhood literature by incorporating the larger community context into an assessment of the immigration-crime relationship.

Data and Methodology

We perform a series of regression analyses using census data on characteristics of neighborhoods in conjunction with violent crime data for census tracts in Chicago and Los Angeles. Census tracts approximate neighborhoods and are the smallest geographic level for which the data are available.

Data

We use data collected by Ruth Peterson and Lauren Krivo as part of the National Neighborhood Crime Study (NNCS). The NNCS comprises a sample of 9,593 census tracts that are wholly or partly inside the boundaries of large U.S. cities. Relevant to our purposes, the NNCS includes tract-level crime data and information on social disorganization, structural disadvantage, and socioeconomic inequality collected from the 2000 U.S. Census of Population and Housing Summary File (SF3).

From the larger NNCS data set, we selected census tracts located in Chicago (n = 876) and Los Angeles (n = 865). In both cities, tracts that have small populations (i.e., fewer than 300 residents) and/or are dominated by institutionalized populations (i.e., greater than 50 percent of the population resides in group quarters) were excluded from the analyses, in line with existing research (Krivo and Peterson 1996, 623). This resulted in a final sample size of 817 tracts in Chicago and 827 tracts in Los Angeles.

Dependent variable

Our dependent variable captures violent crime levels in Chicago and Los Angeles neighborhoods. Violent crime includes homicide and robbery. As explained in Peterson and Krivo (2010, 130), rapes and aggravated assaults are not included because of missing data problems. For rape, this is mainly due to the refusal of police departments to provide data as a matter of law or policy. Aggravated assaults are missing largely because of the poor quality of the data provided. In addition to minimizing missing data problems, including only homicide and robbery in our violent crime measure indirectly addresses the potential effect that underreporting of crime may have on neighborhood crime rates, as homicide and
robbery are less susceptible to underreporting (Fajnzylber, Lederman, and Loayza 2002, 1326). Following common practice, our dependent variable represents the three-year (1999–2001) average count of homicides and robberies within a tract.

**Independent variables**

Our key independent variable is *immigrant concentration*, which is composed of two measures: percentage foreign-born and percentage Latino in a tract. Although we originally intended our immigrant concentration measure to consist of only percentage foreign-born, in both cities the two measures are highly correlated, primarily because Latinos have constituted the largest immigrant group entering the United States in recent decades (Martinez 2006, 9; Rumbaut and Ewing 2007, 3). In our Los Angeles sample, percentage foreign-born and percentage Latino are correlated at $r = .72$. In Chicago, they are correlated at $r = .76$. Such high levels of covariance between these measures suggest that estimating their unique effects on crime would be difficult. For this reason, in each city we combine the measures into an index using factor analysis. In Los Angeles, factor loadings for both measures are high at .926, and nearly 86 percent of the variance in foreign-born and Latino is accounted for by the first principal component (eigenvalue = 1.71). In Chicago, factor loadings for both measures are also high at .938, and over 88 percent of the variance in foreign-born and Latino is accounted for by the first principal component (eigenvalue = 1.76). This measure of immigrant concentration has been used extensively in previous research (Morenoff and Sampson 1997; Ousey and Kubrin 2009; Sampson and Morenoff 2004; Sampson, Raudenbush, and Earls 1997; Stowell et al. 2009).

In addition to immigrant concentration, we include another measure that considers the greater spatial concentration of the foreign-born population in both cities, or the clustering of tracts with a high percentage immigrant population. This measure, which we call *immigrant neighborhoods*, takes into account the clustering of immigrants in neighboring tracts. It allows us to distinguish between neighborhoods that are situated within areas of greater immigrant presence compared to those that may be more spatially isolated.

To capture the presence of immigrant neighborhoods, we conduct exploratory spatial data analysis (ESDA) using GeoDa (Anselin 2003). Exploratory spatial data analysis is a tool to examine broader spatial patterns of interest across geographic areas of different sizes. In our case, we are interested in determining the spatial distribution of immigrants across neighborhoods in Chicago and Los Angeles. In line with prior research (Logan, Alba, and Zhang 2002), we use a measure of spatial autocorrelation, local indicators of spatial association (LISA) (Anselin 1995), to capture the clustering of tracts with a high percentage of foreign-born residents in each city. LISA is a location-specific statistic that identifies the location of immigrant neighborhoods by taking into account unusually high or low percentages of foreign-born residents in a focal census tract as well as the
percentages in neighboring tracts. Our definition of neighbor is less restrictive than alternative options since our aim is to examine whether the broader community context within which immigrant neighborhoods are situated conditions the relationship between immigration and crime. In the analysis, we define “neighbor” as any tract that shares a common boundary with a focal tract (first-order neighbor) and any tract that shares a common boundary with first-order neighbors (second-order neighbor). Thus, we use a contiguity-based spatial weight, the cumulative first- and second-order rook weight, to identify immigrant neighborhoods. We consider a high-high spatial cluster identified by LISA (that is, a census tract with a high value of percentage foreign-born that also has neighboring census tracts with high values of percentage foreign-born) as an immigrant neighborhood. If a census tract is part of an immigrant neighborhood, it is coded as 1 in the dataset (nonimmigrant neighborhoods are coded as 0). All spatial clusters identified in this study are significant at the \( p < .05 \) level.

Additional variables were constructed from the 2000 Census to reflect critical neighborhood differences in poverty, race, unemployment, age composition, family structure, and residential instability. These include the percentage jobless (percentage of civilian labor force age 16 to 64 who are unemployed or not in the labor force), percentage female-headed households (percentage of households that are female-headed with no husband), percentage high school graduates (percentage of adults age 25 and over who are at least high school graduates), percentage in poverty (percentage of the population for whom poverty status is determined whose income in 1999 was below the poverty level), percentage black (percentage of the total population that is non-Hispanic black), residential instability index (index comprised of percentage renters, or percentage of occupied housing units that are renter occupied, and percentage movers, or percentage of population ages 5 and over who lived in a different house in 1995\(^3\)), percentage young males (percentage of the total population who are males between the ages of 15 and 24), and population (tract population). The neighborhoods and crime literature has demonstrated that these characteristics are related to community crime rates in a variety of cities throughout the United States (see Peterson and Krivo 2010, 33–37).

Previous community-level studies have found it necessary to address problems of collinearity among the disadvantage-related independent variables. To diagnose potential collinearity, we examined variance inflation factor (VIF) scores, which confirmed a high degree of collinearity among many of these measures. Using these diagnostics and previous research as a guide (Sampson, Morenoff, and Raudenbush 2005, 226), we performed exploratory factor analysis with varimax rotation for both Chicago and Los Angeles. Not surprisingly, the results suggest the disadvantage-related variables load on a single component, which we label neighborhood disadvantage. For Chicago, neighborhood disadvantage explains 71 percent of the variance and is composed of the following variables (factor loadings in parenthesis): percentage jobless (.94), percentage female-headed households (.91), percentage high school graduates (–.65), percentage in
poverty (.89), and percentage black (.78). For Los Angeles, neighborhood disadvantage explains 81 percent of the variance and is composed of the following variables: percentage jobless (.94), percentage female-headed households (.83), percentage high school graduates (–.92), and percentage in poverty (.91). Percentage black did not load on this index and, for this reason, is treated as a separate covariate in the Los Angeles regression models.4

Analytic strategy

An examination of the univariate distributions revealed skewness in the violent crime rate, not surprising given that urban spatial data such as these are frequently nonnormal in their distribution. Because we are analyzing relatively rare events within small units, we use violent crime counts instead of rates and run negative binomial regression (see also Peterson and Krivo 2010, 131), the most widely recognized Poisson-based model that allows for overdispersion in the data. As recommended by Osgood (2000, 33), we include tract population as an exposure variable (population at risk) and constrain this coefficient to equal 1. Controlling for population size in this way is comparable to analyzing rates.

After providing descriptive statistics, we present findings from a series of negative binomial regression analyses. In the first model, we examine whether immigrant concentration is negatively associated with neighborhood violent crime levels using a baseline model where only immigrant concentration is included. In the second model, we introduce into the analysis the standard neighborhood crime correlates to determine whether any immigrant concentration effect withstands these controls. In the third model, we incorporate a measure of immigrant neighborhoods to assess if neighboring immigrant concentration levels additionally matter for crime. Finally, we conduct a series of robustness checks to determine whether the findings are sensitive to how immigrant neighborhoods are defined. We run models separately for Chicago and Los Angeles to determine whether, and how, the findings may vary across differing social contexts.

Results

Table 1 reports descriptive statistics for all variables in the analyses. The three-year average violent crime rates differ greatly between the two cities, with Chicago’s (8.7) being roughly twice that of Los Angeles (4.3). Measures that comprise the immigrant concentration index also vary. Overall, Los Angeles has a greater immigrant presence; the average percentage foreign-born in L.A. tracts is 40.9 percent, compared to 17.7 percent in Chicago. Latinos comprise a much larger share of immigrants in Los Angeles, as the average percentage Latino across L.A. tracts (46.9 percent) is twice that of Chicago tracts (22.7 percent). Not surprisingly, then, as indicated in Table 1, the average percentage black is significantly higher in Chicago (42.4 percent) than Los Angeles (10.4 percent). A final difference is the
average percentage female-headed households, which is greater in Chicago (22.8 percent) than in Los Angeles (15.5 percent).

Other neighborhood characteristics, however, are generally comparable across the two cities. For example, both have similar average jobless levels (40 percent), poverty levels (22 percent), and percentage high school graduates (69 percent in Chicago and 63 percent in Los Angeles). Levels of residential instability are also remarkably similar, with both cities averaging around 59 percent renters and 48 percent movers across tracts. Finally, the average percentage young males is nearly identical at 7 percent.

Also comparable across the two cities is the number of census tracts that comprise immigrant neighborhoods. Table 1 reveals that, as identified through local indicators of spatial association (LISA), 244 census tracts are classified as part of a larger immigrant community in Chicago. Likewise, 249 census tracts are classified as a part of larger immigrant community in Los Angeles. In both contexts, these tracts have higher levels of percentage foreign-born and are surrounded by neighboring tracts with high immigrant concentration levels.
WHY SOME IMMIGRANT NEIGHBORHOODS ARE SAFER THAN OTHERS

159

Although both cities have roughly the same number of immigrant neighborhoods, the composition of these neighborhoods, it turns out, is quite different. Moreover, for both Chicago and Los Angeles, there are considerable differences in levels of crime, immigrant concentration, and disadvantage between immigrant neighborhoods and their counterparts. Table 2 presents the characteristics of tracts located within immigrant neighborhoods and compares them to their counterparts in each city.

Looking at Table 2, it is evident that average violence levels differ greatly in immigrant neighborhoods when compared to their counterparts in both Chicago and Los Angeles. The average percentage foreign-born and percentage Latino also differ. Even greater differences, however, are noted with respect to average levels of percentage black across the two neighborhood types. Finally, disadvantage levels vary significantly in immigrant neighborhoods compared to other neighborhoods, both in Chicago and Los Angeles. Only levels of residential instability are similar in immigrant and other neighborhoods in Chicago, and in both cities, the average percentage young male is nearly identical across the two neighborhood types.

Perhaps of greater interest is the fact that immigrant neighborhoods themselves are quite distinct in Chicago and Los Angeles. As Table 2 shows, Chicago

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Chicago</th>
<th>Los Angeles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Immigrant Neighborhood</td>
<td>Other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three-year (1999–2001) average homicide and robbery rate per 1,000</td>
<td>4.83</td>
<td>10.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immigrant concentration</td>
<td>Percentage foreign-born</td>
<td>39.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage Latino</td>
<td>49.81</td>
<td>11.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neighborhood disadvantage</td>
<td>Percentage jobless</td>
<td>36.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage female-headed households</td>
<td>13.97</td>
<td>26.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage high school graduates</td>
<td>61.40</td>
<td>72.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage in poverty</td>
<td>16.82</td>
<td>24.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage black</td>
<td>4.99</td>
<td>58.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residential instability</td>
<td>Percentage renters</td>
<td>54.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage movers</td>
<td>46.91</td>
<td>44.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage young males</td>
<td>8.04</td>
<td>6.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>244</td>
<td>573</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOTE: Values in table represent means.
immigrant neighborhoods have, on average, roughly half the violent crime rates of other neighborhoods in that city (4.8 compared to 10.3), yet just the opposite is true in Los Angeles, where immigrant neighborhoods have greater violent crime rates compared to their counterparts (5.4 versus 3.8). Also quite different is the distribution of immigrants. The average level of immigrant concentration in Los Angeles immigrant neighborhoods (58.3) is higher than in Chicago (39.0), as is the average percentage Latino (70.6 percent in Los Angeles compared to 49.8 percent in Chicago).

But the main difference between the two cities is evident from the indicators of neighborhood disadvantage. While Los Angeles’s immigrant neighborhoods are more disadvantaged than their counterparts in that city, the opposite pattern is found for Chicago, where immigrant neighborhoods are less disadvantaged than their counterparts. That is, levels of joblessness, family disruption, and poverty are greater in Los Angeles immigrant neighborhoods (relative to their counterparts), while levels of joblessness, family disruption, and poverty are lower in Chicago immigrant neighborhoods (relative to their counterparts). In essence, the very character of immigrant communities is context dependent.

An important question then is: How might these compositional differences affect the immigration-crime relationship in Chicago and Los Angeles? Are immigrant concentration and spatial embeddedness within a larger immigrant community likely to affect violence in a similar manner across the two contexts? Moving beyond descriptive statistics, we turn to multivariate analyses to address these questions.

Tables 3 and 4 present the results of negative binomial regression models for Chicago and Los Angeles, respectively. Turning first to results for Chicago, model 1 includes only the immigrant concentration measure. As shown, the coefficient is significant and negative, indicating that areas with higher levels of immigrant concentration experienced lower violent crime levels in Chicago, a finding consistent with prior research and our expectations.

Following the baseline model, in model 2 we add several control variables including neighborhood disadvantage, residential instability, and percentage young males. Also consistent with prior research, we find that both disadvantage and instability are significantly positively associated with violent crime levels, in line with social disorganization theory. But of greater interest is the fact that immigrant concentration remains significant after including these measures in the model. Although the coefficient is reduced somewhat (from −.32 in model 1 to −.18 in model 2), it remains significant, suggesting that neighborhoods with higher levels of immigrant concentration experienced lower violent crime levels in Chicago, a finding consistent with prior research and our expectations.

The central focus of this study is to determine whether neighborhoods with high levels of immigrant concentration experience even greater reductions in
violent crime if they are spatially embedded within larger immigrant communities. Thus, in model 3, we introduce our immigrant neighborhood measure. Results from the full model indicate that beyond the level of immigrant concentration, being part of a larger immigrant community decreases violent crime in Chicago tracts (the coefficient for the immigrant neighborhood measure is significant and negative). That is, while tracts with high immigrant concentration have less violent crime, those tracts that are spatially embedded within larger immigrant communities have even less violent crime. The exponentiated coefficient indicates that neighborhoods that are part of a larger immigrant community have 19.8 percent less violent crime compared to those outside of immigrant communities, holding all else constant.

To what extent can the findings in Chicago be replicated in Los Angeles? Turning to model 1 of Table 4, we see the results begin to diverge. Contrary to what was found in Chicago, the baseline model shows that immigrant concentration has a significant, positive effect on violent crime in Los Angeles. Once the control variables are introduced to the analysis, however, the effect becomes negative (see model 2). The exponentiated coefficient indicates that, holding all else constant, a unit increase in immigrant concentration would decrease the expected number of violent crimes by 10.4 percent. Overall, findings in model 2 are generally consistent with the results for Chicago, with the exception that

### TABLE 3
Negative Binomial Regression Results for Neighborhood Characteristics on Violent Crime Count: Chicago

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Model 1</th>
<th>Model 2</th>
<th>Model 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Immigrant concentration</td>
<td>−.32*** (0.02)</td>
<td>−.18*** (0.03)</td>
<td>−.10** (0.04)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neighborhood disadvantage</td>
<td>.50*** (0.03)</td>
<td>.50*** (0.03)</td>
<td>.50*** (0.03)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residential instability</td>
<td>.25*** (0.03)</td>
<td>.24*** (0.03)</td>
<td>.24*** (0.03)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage young males</td>
<td>−.00 (0.01)</td>
<td>−.00 (0.01)</td>
<td>−.22** (0.08)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immigrant neighborhood</td>
<td>−4.83*** (0.03)</td>
<td>−4.94*** (0.08)</td>
<td>−4.86*** (0.08)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>Total population (Exposure)</td>
<td>−6,694.17*** (Exposure)</td>
<td>−3,027.60*** (Exposure)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$\chi^2$</td>
<td>−2 log likelihood</td>
<td>−3,294.10</td>
<td>−3,110.31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOTE: Entries are unstandardized coefficients followed by standard errors in parentheses. **p < 0.01. ***p < .001.
percentage young male is negatively associated with violent crime levels in Los Angeles. Moreover, recall that percentage black is included as a separate covariate in the Los Angeles analysis; as indicated in model 2, percentage black is significantly, positively associated with violent crime levels.

The main divergent finding is apparent in the full model (model 3), where the immigrant neighborhood variable is significant and positive. Contrary to our expectations and in contrast to results for Chicago, census tracts that are part of larger immigrant neighborhoods are likely to have more violent crime compared to census tracts outside of immigrant neighborhoods in Los Angeles. The exponentiated coefficient indicates that neighborhoods within larger immigrant communities have a 44.8 percent higher violent crime level, holding all else constant.

### Supplemental Analyses

We conducted supplemental analyses to ensure the robustness of the findings reported above. In particular, we investigated whether the results may be influenced

**TABLE 4**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Model 1</th>
<th>Model 2</th>
<th>Model 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Immigrant concentration</td>
<td>.17***</td>
<td>-.11*</td>
<td>-.23***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.03)</td>
<td>(.05)</td>
<td>(.06)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neighborhood disadvantage</td>
<td>.42***</td>
<td>.43***</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.05)</td>
<td>(.05)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residential instability</td>
<td>.33***</td>
<td>.30***</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.04)</td>
<td>(.04)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage young males</td>
<td>-.25**</td>
<td>-.21*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.09)</td>
<td>(.09)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage black</td>
<td>.12***</td>
<td>.14***</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.02)</td>
<td>(.02)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immigrant neighborhood</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.37***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(.07)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>-5.48***</td>
<td>-5.36***</td>
<td>-5.58***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.03)</td>
<td>(.17)</td>
<td>(.17)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total population</td>
<td>(Exposure)</td>
<td>(Exposure)</td>
<td>(Exposure)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$\chi^2$</td>
<td>7,909.93***</td>
<td>4,618.76***</td>
<td>4,452.57***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$-2 \log$ likelihood</td>
<td>-3,196.67</td>
<td>-3,019.19</td>
<td>-3,006.97</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOTE: Entries are unstandardized coefficients followed by standard errors in parentheses. 
* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$. 


by the definition of “neighbor” used to measure immigrant neighborhoods. In our main analyses, we defined “neighbor” as any tract that shares a common boundary with a focal tract (first-order neighbor) and any tract that shares a common boundary with first-order neighbors (second-order neighbor), using the cumulative first- and second-order rook weight. However, in the supplemental analyses, we identified immigrant neighborhoods using two additional methods to define “neighboring tracts.” First, neighbor is defined as any tract that shares a common boundary or vertex, referred to as a first-order queen weight. Second, we restricted the cumulative first- and second-order rook weight by using only the first-order neighbors. We reestimated the models using these new immigrant neighborhood measures. The results did not differ from what we presented in the main analyses for Los Angeles. However, for Chicago, the immigrant neighborhood variable was no longer significant in the results using the more restrictive definition of neighboring tract, first-order neighbor.

We also examined whether the results may be sensitive to the significance level used to identify immigrant neighborhoods. To assess this, we reduced the significance level from .05 to .01 and .001, and we created new immigrant neighborhood variables for each significance level. Not surprisingly, the number of tracts identified as “immigrant neighborhoods” declined as the significance level was reduced. We reestimated the models using these new measures. The results for Los Angeles did not differ from what we presented using a significance level of .05. However, the immigrant neighborhood variable lost its significance in the results for Chicago using .001 significance levels. Thus, while immigrant concentration is still negatively associated with violent crime levels in Chicago, there is no longer an added benefit to being situated within a larger immigrant neighborhood.

Understanding Divergent Patterns

Collectively, the findings from the analyses indicate that immigrant neighborhoods are some of the safest neighborhoods in Los Angeles and Chicago. In both cities, we found that immigrant concentration was significantly negatively associated with violent crime levels, even after controlling for standard neighborhood covariates. This finding is in line with our expectations and consistent with the studies discussed above.

What the findings also indicate, however, is that immigrant neighborhoods embedded within larger immigrant communities have lower than average violent crime levels in Chicago yet higher than average levels in Los Angeles. What accounts for this divergent finding? Why are violent crime levels higher in Los Angeles immigrant neighborhoods that are spatially concentrated within larger immigrant communities?

To begin to understand these divergent patterns, we examined the spatial distribution of violent crime across immigrant neighborhoods in Chicago and Los
Angeles, respectively, as demonstrated in Figures 1 and 2. As shown in Figure 1, two clusters of census tracts form two larger immigrant neighborhoods in Chicago based upon our LISA measure. The immigrant neighborhood located to the north end of the city covers several areas, including Albany Park, Avondale, Belmont Cragin, Dunning, Edgewater, Hermosa, Irvine Park, Lincoln Square, Logan Square, Montclare, North Park, Portage Park, Rogers Park, Uptown, and West Ridge. The other immigrant neighborhood is in the center of Chicago and comprises Archer Heights, Armour Square, Bridgeport, Brighton Park, Gage Park, Lower West Side, McKinley Park, New City, South Lawndale, and West Elsdon.

Also evident in Figure 1 is that these immigrant neighborhoods overlap significantly with areas of less crime. In fact, the average violent crime rates of both neighborhoods are low and remarkably similar. The neighborhood in the north of Chicago has an average crime rate of 4.64 across the tracts; likewise, the
neighborhood in the center of Chicago has an average rate of 5.13. Moreover, both have lower average rates compared to Chicago as a whole (8.68). Thus, the dynamics that lead to lower crime levels appear to operate similarly in both Chicago immigrant neighborhoods.

Similar to Chicago, two immigrant neighborhoods are identified in Los Angeles using our LISA measure. One neighborhood is located north of downtown and comprises Arleta, North Hollywood, Valley Glen, Van Nuys, Panorama
City, and Sun Valley. The other is located in the south of the city and incorporates Koreatown, Pico Union, Westlake, and Wilshire Center and stretches to Hollywood to the north; South LA to the south; Mid-Wilshire to the west; and Chinatown, Boyle Heights, and Lincoln Heights to the east. As Figure 2 shows, unlike in Chicago, these two neighborhoods have vastly different crime patterns. The average violent crime rate is roughly three times greater in the immigrant neighborhood located to the south (6.30) compared to the one located to the north (2.74). In essence, then, the distribution of violent crime across immigrant neighborhoods is quite distinct in Chicago and Los Angeles. In Chicago, both neighborhoods, despite any differences in composition, enjoy relatively low crime levels. Alternatively, in Los Angeles, we find that one neighborhood parallels what we find in Chicago, with low violent crime levels, while the other has much higher levels. In the remainder of the article, we speculate about possible explanations for these divergent findings.

Conclusion

Prior studies have repeatedly shown that neighborhoods with higher immigrant concentration levels have lower crime rates, or that there is no association between the two. We have yet to understand, however, how the larger community context within which immigrant neighborhoods are situated conditions the relationship between immigration and crime. In our study, we examined whether neighborhoods with high levels of immigrant concentration that are located within larger immigrant communities are likely to enjoy even greater crime reductions. Our findings indicate that immigrant concentration is negatively associated with violent crime, in accordance with prior studies. Yet we also find that while immigrant neighborhoods embedded within larger immigrant communities have lower than average violent crime levels in Chicago, those in Los Angeles report just the opposite—higher violent crime levels.

The larger message is clear: context matters. But how does context matter and in what ways? To fully answer this question, one must compare the characteristics of the immigrant neighborhoods both within and across the cities. In addition, a more complete understanding of each neighborhood’s historical development is necessary. Finally, one would do well to scour the ethnographic literature on Los Angeles and Chicago immigrant communities to get a feel for what is happening “on the ground,” which also may provide insight into how and why context matters. Although it is beyond the scope of the present study to fully account for what may be creating the divergent patterns we observe, below we offer three explanations that, in our opinion, likely have some impact.

One possible explanation is consistent with social disorganization theory, which asserts that racial and ethnic diversity may be associated with high crime rates in communities. For starters, recall the earlier discussion about how such diversity can undermine ties between neighbors, reducing informal
social control. Moreover, although neighborhoods with diverse immigrant populations can offer institutional support to their members, resources that are enjoyed by one ethnic group are not automatically transferable to members of other ethnic groups. As just one example, supplementary education institutions for children of Chinese immigrants, which have been growing in number since the late 1980s, not only promote educational achievement but also “serve as a locus of social support and control, network building, and social capital formation” (Zhou 2009, 161). While this type of ethnic institution helps children of Chinese immigrants succeed academically and build social ties regardless of socioeconomic background, access to such resources and opportunities is not necessarily available for members of other ethnic groups residing in the neighborhood. That is, social and economic cooperation among immigrants from diverse backgrounds is not axiomatic; as such, variation in racial and ethnic diversity levels across the immigrant communities in our study may be what is driving, in part, the divergent findings.

A quick glance at the data for Los Angeles reveals nonuniformity in racial and ethnic diversity levels across the immigrant neighborhoods. For example, while Hispanics constitute approximately two-thirds of the population in both neighborhoods, the one in the south has a higher proportion of Asians (15 percent compared to just 8 percent for the north), creating greater diversity. Unfortunately, due to limitations of census data, we are unable to disentangle immigrant status by race and ethnicity. Still, we believe further investigation of these issues may inform the divergent patterns noted in the data.

Another explanation consistent with social disorganization theory relates to residential turnover among immigrants. According to the model of spatial assimilation, immigrants first settle in older central city neighborhoods where there is a high concentration of coethnics (Massey 1985). This residential pattern is fed by chain migration, in which new immigrants rely on the social networks of their family members and friends when selecting destinations. As the number of new residents increases, more ethnic organizations are established to offer services for residents (Breton 1964). However, the immigrant neighborhood is a temporary residential location for many immigrants. As immigrants acculturate and achieve socioeconomic mobility, they move to areas that offer improved residential amenities, creating high rates of turnover. Residential turnover may lead to decreases in informal social control and higher crime levels in those immigrant neighborhoods, as social disorganization theory predicts. In line with this argument, then, it may be that the immigrant neighborhood in the south of Los Angeles is a more temporary area for immigrants than is its counterpart to the north. In sum, racial and ethnic diversity and the temporal nature of neighborhoods within which immigrants reside may help us understand the pattern of results found in the study.

Another explanation for the divergent findings may be related to immigrant generational status (i.e., first, second, third, etc. generation). Generational status is important because it has direct bearing on the cultural assimilation of
immigrants. Assimilation refers to “the decline, and only at some ultimate endpoint the disappearance, of an ethnic distinction and its allied differences” (Alba and Nee 1997, 7). The process of assimilation involves, among other things, the acquisition of English language proficiency, higher levels of education, valuable job skills, and other attributes that ease immigrants’ entry into U.S. society and improve their chances of success in the U.S. economy (Rumbaut and Ewing 2007, 2).

As this definition implies, scholars have long argued that assimilation represents the most direct path toward upward mobility and later “success” in life for immigrants. Yet recent work challenges this notion, suggesting that assimilation may not be a wholly beneficial process. This has certainly been true with respect to assimilation and crime. A growing literature finds that assimilated immigrants have higher—not lower—rates of criminal involvement compared to unassimilated immigrants (Y. Lee 1998; Morenoff and Astor 2006, 47; Zhou and Bankston 2006, 124). A related literature shows that the children of immigrants (the second generation), who are typically more assimilated than their parents, have higher crime rates than their parents (Morenoff and Astor 2006, 36; Rumbaut et al. 2006, 72; Sampson, Morenoff, and Raudenbush 2005; Taft 1933; Zhou and Bankston 1998). Findings such as these have led scholars to describe an “assimilation paradox” (Rumbaut and Ewing 2007, 2), where the crime problem reflects “not the foreign born but their children” (Tonry 1997, 10).

What accounts for these patterns? One explanation relates to the consequences of the “Americanization” experience of immigrants. Because many immigrants settle in disadvantaged neighborhoods upon arrival into the United States, part of that experience involves navigating the “challenges confronting immigrant children in U.S. neighborhoods in a social context promoting dropping out of school, joining youth gangs, or participating in the drug subculture” (Portes and Rumbaut 2001, 59). This alternative path is referred to as downward assimilation or downward mobility (Morenoff and Astor 2006; Rumbaut et al. 2006, 73) because socialization for some immigrants does not encourage a path toward upward mobility but instead results in adopting a deviant lifestyle. In essence, “The children and grandchildren of many immigrants—as well as many immigrants themselves the longer they live in the United States—become subject to economic and social forces, such as higher rates of family disintegration and drug and alcohol addiction, that increase the likelihood of criminal behavior” (Rumbaut and Ewing 2007, 2).

Another explanation considers the challenges associated with navigating two, often conflicting, worlds, particularly for the second generation: “Born or raised in the United States, they inherit their immigrant parents’ customs and circumstances but come of age with a distinctively American outlook and frame of reference and face the often-daunting task of fitting into the American mainstream while meeting their parents’ expectations, learning the new language, doing well in school, and finding decent jobs” (Rumbaut et al. 2006, 65). A case study of Vietnamese youth in a Vietnamese enclave in New Orleans documents this
tension. Zhou and Bankston (2006) find the youth in their study are subject to two opposing sets of contextual influences: on one hand, the ethnic community was tightly knit and encouraged normative behaviors such as respect for elders, diligence in work, and striving for upward social mobility into mainstream American society; on the other hand, the local American community was socially marginalized and economically impoverished. Interviews with the youth reveal they reacted to this situation by developing oppositional subcultures to reject normative means to social mobility (p. 119).

Regardless of which processes may be operating, what the findings in the literature imply is that generational status and assimilation likely play an important role in understanding the divergent patterns documented in our study. It may be the case that violence is more prevalent in the immigrant neighborhood located in the south of Los Angeles because the residents living in those census tracts, on average, are more assimilated compared to those residents living in the immigrant neighborhood located in northern Los Angeles. This is an empirical question. An important next step, then, is to compare generational status and assimilation levels across the two immigrant neighborhoods in Los Angeles. Measures of assimilation include language use and English proficiency, citizenship, spatial concentration of ethnic groups, and interethnic social relations. Some of these are available from the census and could be examined across the various immigrant neighborhoods.

A final explanation that may help account for the study’s divergent findings addresses the issue of differentiation in structural conditions (beyond immigrant concentration) in surrounding neighborhoods. In our analysis, we control for disadvantage levels within immigrant neighborhoods. But such an approach may be limited, in part because it overlooks the embeddedness of neighborhoods within larger areas of disadvantage (or advantage). Inequality in the character of nearby neighborhoods, we argue, may account for why crime patterns vary.

This argument is not farfetched. Peterson and Krivo (2010) document the role of nearby neighborhoods for understanding why crime rates are higher in predominantly African American compared to predominantly white neighborhoods in their study of nearly nine thousand neighborhoods in over ninety U.S. cities. They find that notable gaps in violence remain unaccounted for across black and white communities, even after controlling for the “usual suspects,” including racialized community conditions. They theorize this may result from “spatial inequality,” or the uneven spatial distribution of black and white communities in terms of their proximity to resources. They argue, “A common feature of many African American neighborhoods, whatever their internal character, is proximity to communities with characteristics typically associated with higher crime rates, such as high levels of disadvantage and residential turnover. In contrast, white areas are often surrounded by neighborhoods where crime-promoting conditions are relatively absent and factors that discourage crime, such as external community investments, are prevalent” (p. 91). In fact, Peterson and Krivo (2010) document support for this argument. They find that even after controlling for internal
neighborhood conditions, three characteristics of proximate areas—residential
instability, disadvantage, and the prevalence of white residents—affect violent
crime rates. In essence, being located near more highly disadvantaged neighbor-
hoods tends to increase violence by intensifying violent crime in neighboring
communities.

Following this line of reasoning, the divergent findings we document may be
attributable, in part, to the fact that the Los Angeles immigrant communities are
differentially situated in terms of their spatial proximity to areas with higher or
lower levels of crime-producing social conditions. In particular, the high-crime
immigrant neighborhood may be spatially proximate to areas with high levels of
social deprivation and other detrimental conditions, such as the presence of
gangs, which create unique risks for crime. Alternatively, the lower-crime immi-
grant neighborhood may be located close to areas of privilege, which provide
access to social, political, and economic resources that keep violence low.
Consider, for example, that there are significant differences in gang membership
and activity in the northern and southern immigrant neighborhoods in Los
Angeles. In particular, South Central L.A. immigrant neighborhoods are located
in the middle of established gang turfs. One area in particular, Boyle Heights, is
home to several violent gangs including Big Hazard and Krazy Ass Mexicans. By
contrast, gangs are not nearly as prevalent in immigrant neighborhoods located
to the north. Once again, the extent to which differentiation in structural condi-
tions (beyond immigrant concentration) in surrounding neighborhoods accounts
for the divergent findings is an empirical question that can and should be exam-
ined in future research.

By no means are these the only explanations worth considering. Yet as a start-
ing point, we argue much can be gained by exploring in greater detail the immi-
grant communities themselves on many dimensions including racial and ethnic
diversity, residential turnover, generational status/assimilation, and spatial prox-
imity to areas with higher or lower levels of crime-producing social conditions.

We close with one additional recommendation for future researchers. In line
with our maxim, “context matters,” we encourage researchers to examine these
issues in additional cities beyond Chicago and Los Angeles. In our selection of
study sites, we opted to focus on established immigration gateway cities, or
areas with long immigration histories and large and diverse immigrant popula-
tions. Of interest, however, is the extent to which the findings reported here
apply in new or emerging immigrant destination contexts such as Atlanta,
Phoenix, or Seattle. In all three cities, immigration levels have grown consider-
ably over the past two decades, and not always without growing pains. Also
of interest is potential variation in findings based upon whether cities are
“immigrant-friendly,” such as those designated “sanctuary cities,” compared to
those without such designation. Clearly, there are many directions one could
explore. At a minimum, though, we hope the divergent findings spur researchers
to continue examining the not-so-straightforward relationship between immi-
gration and crime.
Notes

1. For an overview and additional information about NNCS data, see Peterson and Krivo (2009).

2. It is calculated as \[ I = \frac{\bar{z}}{\bar{z}_i} \sum w_{ij} z_j, \] where \( \bar{z}_i = \sum z_i^2 \) is the deviation from the sample mean of the variable of interest (percentage foreign-born) and \( w_{ij} \) is an element of a row-standardized spatial weight matrix.

3. The index represents the average of the standardized scores of these two variables.

4. Examination of collinearity diagnostics revealed no multicollinearity in the parameter estimates presented below for Chicago (i.e., no VIF was greater than 4). In the analyses for Los Angeles, however, there is very slight collinearity between the immigrant concentration and neighborhood disadvantage measures, with VIFs of 4.14 and 3.78, respectively. This is consistent with findings from other research on Los Angeles neighborhoods (Kimbro 2009). Given the study's focus on immigrant concentration and the importance of controlling for disadvantage, we argue both must be included in the model despite their high correlation. We reran the analyses including only each measure, and the substantive conclusions remain unchanged.

References


