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Immigration and Crime in Catalonia, Spain: What's the Connection? Towards a Theory on Immigrant Crime

Rebecca Westbrook

Introduction

The crime rate in Spain has increased substantially in the last 20 years. In 2008, according to the National Institute of Statistics, the crime rate increased by 17.1% from the previous year (Instituto Nacional de Estadistica [INE], 2008). Simultaneously Spain has changed from a country of heavy emigration to an attractive country for economic migrants. Since 2000, there has been a 24% increase in the number of legally registered immigrants residing in Spain (Cornelius, 2004). Spaniards have made a connection between these parallel phenomena, believing that one variable has caused the other. In a recent opinion poll conducted in 2007 by a non-profit organization, SOS Racismo, 60% of Spaniards reported that they believed immigrants to be the cause in the recent increase in crime (SOS Racismo, 2007).

While it is easy to simply regard these fears as xenophobia creeping into a society afraid of change, according to Calavita (2005), a pro-immigrant researcher, they are in fact valid fears. Calavita found that in 2001 the proportion of the prison population born abroad in Spain was twenty five times higher than the proportion of immigrants in the population and she says their numbers continue to grow each year (2005). While she says that discrimination could play a role, Spanish citizens have not. The negative perception of immigrants as criminals predominates in their minds and it appears to be here to stay.

In the study to follow, using the case of Catalonia, I will examine the level of immigration and crime rates between 2003 and 2007 to see if in fact there is a relationship between crime and immigration, and if so why? And if my hypothesis is incorrect, then what is it that causes immigrants to commit crime and at a rate higher than native Spaniards? Using both a criminological and sociological based framework to analyze this situation, I hypothesize that when demographic variables are controlled for there is only a weak correlation between immigration and crime. The majority of individuals who choose to immigrate to Spain and Catalonia specifically are single men between the ages of 18 and 35 and it is precisely this population that criminologists such as Wilson and Sampson (2005) claim have the highest incidence of criminal delinquency. Therefore I hypothesize that it is these demographic characteristics of immigrant populations and not specifically the status of being an immigrant

that is the causal variable for this correlation.

Understanding the Immigrant-Crime Linkage

Immigration to Spain

Scholars agree that before the fall of Franco in 1975, Spain was a country of emigration, with Spaniards immigrating mainly to Northern European countries in search of employment. Spain also had a high level of internal migration from the rural regions in the south to the industrial cities of the north (Calavita, 2005; Cornelius, 2004; Rovolis & Tragaki, 2006). At the same time, Spaniards began to attain higher levels of education, spending more years in school, which led to a substantial reduction in the availability of workers in the labor intensive agricultural sector (Potot, 2009). When Spain joined the European Community in 1986 its economy experienced a substantial growth and expansion. This situation, Cornelius (2004) argues created the pull factors that drew willing economic immigrants to Spain for the first time.

In this initial phase of immigration during the 1980s and 1990s, the majority of immigrants came from within Europe but progressively this changed, with new migratory flows originating from Latin America and Northern Africa. Immigrants from these regions of the world predominantly came from the Dominican Republic, the Andean region countries and Morocco (Cornelius, 2004). Continuing from that first wave, the level of immigration continued to grow each year with an increasing number of immigrants originating from third world nations. In 2000, 60% of foreigners to Spain originated from outside the European Union with 29.3% coming from Africa and another 22% from Latin America (Ministerio del Interior [MIR], 2002). Beginning around the year 2000, immigrants began to arrive in Spain from Asia, with the majority coming from Pakistan and Bangladesh and to a lesser extent from China and the Philippines (Aubia & Josep, 2004).

Like other European countries, Cornelius (2004) claims that among Spain's immigrant population there is a high incidence of illegality, with its proportion being only second to that of France. Using government data on the number of rejections issued in the most recent regularization campaign in 2001, Calavita (2005) speculates that as little as 300,000 to as many as 700,000 illegal immigrants reside in Spain. Illegal immigrants tend to work in the informal sector, and are predominant in the service and agricultural sector (Calavita, 2005). She argues that illegal immigrants would not be represented in the government's regularization campaign statistics. Therefore when examining the statistical data for immigrants, it is important to note that the data could be skewed in favor of EU immigrants who are more likely to have legal status (Calavita, 2005). Although these statistics might show an incomplete picture, they nonetheless provide a breadth of knowledge that is invaluable for examining the immigrant situation in Spain.

According to census data, the majority of immigrants are male with the exception of Latin American immigrants who tend to be women immigrating specifically to work in the domestic service sector. They also tend to be between the ages of 18 to 35 years old (INE, 2007). Both Calavita (2005) and myself have hypothesized that it is these typical demographic characteristics of immigrants that could possibly explain their overrepresentation in crime statistics because it is typically young single males that criminologists argue are responsible for the majority of criminal acts.

Another plausible explanation as to why there might be a correlation between immi-

gration and crime lies in the economic situation that immigrants typically find themselves in. Immigrants in Spain typically have higher unemployment rates than that of their native Spaniard peers but a substantial difference exists between different immigrant groups. For example, Moroccans tend to have the highest rate at 32% in 2006, with Rumanians at 20% and native Spaniards at 7.6% (INE, 2007). When immigrants are employed in the formal labor market they typically tend to work in the service sector such as in the tourism industry, in construction or agriculture (Huntoon, 1998). These sectors are highly volatile and vulnerable to global economic fluctuations thus exposing those individuals dependent on them to varying degrees of economic stress (Aparicio, 2007). That could possibly be a motivating factor to engage in criminal behavior in order to survive.

Other case studies have made the connection between economic stressors and its relationship to crime. For example, in Glaser and Rice's 1959 study on crime and unemployment in the United States, they found that adult crime increased in times of high unemployment (as cited by Jones, 2006). Hansen and Machin also found in their 2002 study in England and Wales that an increase in the minimum wage was correlated with a decrease in crime in areas most affected by the wage increase (as cited by Jones, 2006). Box found a correlation between crime and economically disadvantaged communities in 11 of the 16 cases that he examined in England between 1974 and 1985 (as cited by Jones, 2006).

Structural inequality explanations of criminal behavior have been the focus of the majority of modern research on the causes of crime. According to Merton's Strain Theory, when individuals lack the legitimate means to realistically achieve the middle class goal of material wealth, they seek alternative and sometimes illegal means to achieve the same ends. That is how he explained social class differences in the incidence of criminal behavior (as cited by Jones, 2006). Both Merton and Durkheim emphasized that it was not necessarily the circumstance of poverty that led to crime but rather the feeling of relative deprivation by disadvantaged groups in comparison to the middle class (as cited by Jones, 2006). Being that many immigrants are denied the legal right to work and thus are forced into the lowest paid positions in the margins of society, Strain Theory would lead one to expect to find a relationship between immigration and crime.

One reason that immigrants to Spain typically occupy marginalized positions in Spanish society lies in the recent policy shifts implemented by the government under pressure from the European Union. Before Spain joined the European Community [EC] in 1986, it did not have a formal immigration policy. Therefore there were essentially no illegal immigrants (Calavita, 2003). However with the implementation of the European Union's Schengen agreement in 1992, all internal borders between EC members were removed. As a result Spain was pressured to tighten up its external borders and increase internal regulations so as not to be the weakest link in immigration (Agrela, 2002). Wanting to impress its new economic partners, Spain adopted a number of policies that ignored its structural internal demand for cheap and flexible immigrant labor. This forced many employers to hire illegally and switch to the informal, unregulated sector which has had lasting effects on the economic and social positions of immigrants (Moreno, 2004).

While Moreno explains this policy shift by portraying Spain sympathetically as a country caught between its own internal needs and those of the EU, Calavita (2005) portrays this same shift as a strategic economic decision. She argues that immigrants provide a crucial form of cheap and flexible labor for Spain's developing economy and in order to keep them profitable they need to be exploitable (Calavita, 2005). In order to achieve this, the Spanish

government has implemented immigration policies that have institutionalized the illegality of immigrants.

Although Calavita (2005) portrays the Spanish government as rather cynical, since its ingression in the EU, Spain has had five regularization campaigns (1985, 1991, 1996, 2000, and 2001). Undocumented immigrants already residing in Spain for the first time could apply for legal residence permits lasting typically for one year (Migration Information Source [MIS], 2005). Each of these campaigns has received more applications than the previous one. However, according to the MIS (2005), each has had a steadily decreasing rate of approval. Nonetheless, Huntoon, (1998) gives the Spanish government some credit in trying to address some of the problems through these regularization campaigns. He argues that while these were valid attempts by the Spanish government to address the pseudo illegal status of many immigrants, because of their rigid application requirements the effect was minimal. The majority of immigrants that it was intended to reach were ineligible and thus forced to maintain their undocumented status (Huntoon, 1998).

Calavita (2005) argues there are long lasting negative implications for immigrants who are undocumented. She claims that by being forced to maintain their illegal status, immigrants cannot ask for redress (Calavita, 2005). Thus they are an easy population to manipulate and will work in conditions that are economically profitable for employers. This implies that immigrants are not allowed to integrate into society and are increasingly forced to the margins of society (Moreno, 2005). They are not only considered to be an outsider in Spanish society, but worse, they have been construed as threats, dangerous and essentially outlaws because of their pseudo illegal status.

According to Symbolic Interactionist theorists, such as Lemert, the effect of such a label can be self perpetuating in that by being labeled a criminal, individuals sometimes live up to that expectation and actively seek out criminal acts to engage in (as cited by Jones, 2006). Therefore the argument offered by the literature that emphasizes the failure of immigrants to integrate into Spanish society and the label placed upon them would lead one to expect to find that being an immigrant is linked to increased rates of criminal behavior.

While the majority of researchers discuss the economic and social effects of Spain's harsh immigration policies, Tello (2008) and Simmel (1971), take a psychological approach. Tello (2008) argues that immigrants internalize the illegal identity that society has placed on them and they begin to feel that they are in fact an "outsider." Simmel (1971) identifies a form of interaction he calls, "the stranger," which he defines to be someone that is not attached to society through relatives, locality, occupation or really with anyone (as cited by Jones, 2006). The function of such an identity according to Simmel (1971) is to be excluded from society, thereby solidifying the social cohesion of the rest of the group at "the stranger's" expense (as cited by Jones, 2006). While he does not specifically attach this type of interaction to immigrant populations or to criminal behavior one could expect to find this type of relationship among young single male immigrant populations who individually immigrate to Spain. Also, the lack of attachment typified by this type of interaction pattern could be related to criminal behavior.

Tello (2008) argues that the creation of the immigrant identity as an outsider explains the tendency of immigrants to live where they feel most comfortable, with other immigrants of the same background. This has led to the formation of many ethnic enclaves in Barcelona. However, by creating their own neighborhoods, separate from the rest of Spanish society, Tello (2008) claims that they are only reinforcing their own separation. Besides pre-

venting integration, social disorganization theorists such as Ernest Burgess and Robert Park argue that ethnic enclaves are characterized by high rates of resident mobility and low levels of integration (as cited by Jones, 2006). The effect being that residents see little incentive to invest what little resources they have in the community or to donate the time needed to foster a sense of community so social problems tend to go unaddressed. It is these conditions Burgess and Park argue, that have the highest potential for producing criminal delinquency (as cited by Jones, 2006).

Shaw and McKay, in looking at the environmental causes of immigrant crime found in the case of inner-city Chicago found that the heterogeneity of cultures and languages among residents in the neighborhoods seemed to prevent the community from exerting social control over its delinquent residents (as cited by Jones, 2006). This they argued was because the difference in cultural norms between the different immigrant groups meant that they could not reach a consensus of common values to defend. So delinquent residents increasingly engaged in more criminal behavior with no social repercussions from the community in which they lived. This they argued explains why deviance had persisted from one generation to the next despite the fact that there was little consistency in residents as groups moved in and out frequently (as cited by Jones, 2006).

While Shaw and McKay argue that high crime rates in immigrant neighborhoods will persist across generations, Tello (2008) disagrees. She instead believes that as immigrants slowly begin to integrate into society and slowly move up the economic ladder they will be able to demand more rights and make sure that their presence is known (Tello, 2008).

Moren-Alegret (2002) also takes an optimistic point of view for the future of immigrant integration in Spain. She argues that immigrants are increasingly pooling their social capital to create social organizations which are in turn used to demand changes in anti-immigrant legislation to favor their needs (Moren-Alegret, 2002). While her argument holds true for certain immigrant populations that she examines, such as the Swedish and Japanese, these groups tend to belong to higher social classes than other immigrant groups such as the Moroccan population. Because of these class distinctions, ethnic groups of lower social class might not have the same social capital skills or the resources to pool collectively in the same way as higher socioeconomic groups. These factors could account for the different success rates among immigrant populations at integrating into Spanish society.

While Moren-Alegret (2002) looks at the level of social capital immigrant populations have and its implication for integration, Aparicio (2007) uses immigrants' educational achievements to measure their relative success at integrating into Spanish society. She examines 1.5 and 2nd generation Peruvian, Dominican and Moroccan immigrants. She defines a 1.5 generation immigrant to be someone who was born abroad but moved to Spain at a relatively young age and therefore was predominantly socialized through the host countries institutions. Aparicio (2007) found that all three immigrant groups achieved less than their Spanish peers but more than their first generation parents. Moroccans were typically the first to leave school, followed by the Dominicans and lastly the Peruvians who generally achieved levels of education that were most comparable to that of their native Spaniards peers. She speculates the cause of such a discrepancy to be that Peruvians have weaker social ties to their ethnic community and thus tend to foster more relationships with Spaniards. Aparicio (2007) says this in turn means they are typically better received by native Spaniards and are as a consequence less likely to be discriminated against than their Moroccan and Dominican peers who are more strongly connected to their ethnic community.

In Spain, citizenship is obtained by Juis Sanguis or by common blood and thus second generation immigrants with illegal parents become illegal themselves. Aparicio (2007) addresses the cyclical implications of this policy. She claims that while second generation undocumented immigrants generally have higher levels of education than their parents; they lack the opportunities to use it (Aparicio, 2007). Like their parents, they have no choice but to work in the illegal informal sector, which is generally comprised of lower level jobs. This she argues only reinforces their exclusion and distinguishes them as different and inferior and fails to provide incentives for further education on their part, or the opportunity to integrate (Aparicio, 2007).

Calavita (1998) is also pessimistic about the long term prospects for the integration of third world immigrant groups in Spain. She argues a distinction has been drawn between the connotation of the word "immigrant," which is used to differentiate between third world immigrants, and the term "foreigner," which is reserved just for first world immigrants (Calavita, 1998). This distinction has created a hierarchy among immigrants and distinguishes between desirable groups - those who have generally been integrated successfully in Spain and those of the third world who are rejected and excluded from Spanish society (Calavita, 1998).

It is important to note here that the examined literature has not explicitly mentioned that third world immigrants typically tend to differ from Europeans in racial terms and this undoubtedly plays a significant role in the different outcomes for immigrant groups. I will address the possible role of race later in the literature review.

In contrast to Calavita's (1998) between-class analysis, Potot (2008) uses within-class reasons to explain why some immigrant groups have failed to integrate. Using the case study of the small rural town of El Ejido, located in Andalusia, Potot (2008) argues that economic competition between immigrant groups of the same class has prevented them from pooling their social leverage against employers. She argues that the North African immigrants who have been fighting for social, economic and political rights from employers have also come into conflict with the Rumanian immigrant population. This, Potet (2009) argues, occurs when North-African immigrants, who typically intend to settle long term in Spain, decide to strike, and the Rumanians, who generally immigrate for short periods of time, continue to work. This conflict of interest has prevented the two immigrants groups from aligning and petitioning collectively for higher wages, legal work contracts and overall better working conditions thus allowing employers to continue to exploit them (Potet, 2009).

Potot (2009) goes further when examining the conflict and tensions among locals and immigrant populations. She argues that the higher discrimination experienced by North African immigrants in comparison to Rumanians is due to a long history of animosity towards "Los moros," or North African Muslim populations and their tendency for long-term settlement (Potet, 2009). Permanent immigration of foreign groups can lead to drastic changes to the ethnic, social and cultural dynamics of the community, which is perceived as a threat by locals (Potet, 2009). Agrela (2002) also addresses this subject. She claims that immigrants are perceived to threaten the cultural hegemony of Spain and are viewed as the cause of the country's high unemployment rate despite the fact that they generally fill a different niche in the labor market than most native Spaniards (Agrela, 2002).

Calavita (1998, 2003, and 2005) argues that the immigrant threat has been amplified and generalized to a perception that immigrants actually represent a danger to the safety of Spaniards. They have been portrayed as criminals and blamed for the increase in crime rates

(Calavita 1998, 2003, 2005; Agrela, 2002). This perception has been captured by nationwide opinion polls of immigrants by Spaniards. According to SOS Racisimo in their 2002 opinion poll, 60% of Spaniards believed that immigration had caused an increase in the crime rate in (S0S Racisimo, 2002). Since 2002, these xenophobic beliefs have not diminished but have continued to reflect the majority of Spanish citizens. In another poll documented by Calavita (2005), it was found that one-third of Spaniards believe that immigrants are dangerous and pose a substantial threat to their safety.

While it is easy to simply devalue these beliefs as xenophobic and overt examples of racism, Calavita, (2005) examined prison populations in Spain and found that in fact the foreign born prison population was twenty-five times higher than the proportion of immigrants in the population in 2001 and she says the number of foreign interned continues to grow each year. While this does support a correlation between immigration and crime, it could also simply reflect the idea that being undocumented is a crime or reflect the discrimination that immigrants face in the criminal justice system.

Increasingly, these perceptions have been used by conservative politicians to instill a climate of fear in the minds of Spaniards. Spanish Prime Minister Aznar when talking to the Italian press on a recent trip to Rome said, "…illegal immigration must be combated decisively because illegal immigration generates criminal networks, and mafia rings that traffic in human beings" (Calavita, 2005, p. 137). This kind of political rhetoric has pressured the current liberal parliament to respond with increasingly restrictionist policies that marginalize immigrants more and push them further into the underground economy (Calavita, 1998).

According to the theoretical literature thus presented, sociologists and criminologists argue that there are a number of internal and external circumstances that motivate individuals to commit crimes. The economic, environmental and social situations that they argue to be associated with higher levels of criminality have been documented by Spanish scholars to be present in the case of immigrant populations in Spain. The economic strain, lack of integration opportunities, formation of ethnic enclaves and immigrant's internationalization of host-countries negative perceptions that scholars argue immigrant populations in Spain endure, would lead one to believe that a relationship exists between immigration and crime in the case of Catalonia.

The Social Bases of Criminal Behavior

Race has been found to be related to criminal behavior. Flowers (1989) found that while whites are more likely to be both offenders and victims, minority groups specifically blacks and Hispanics have the highest crime rate in the United States. Another variable found to influence criminal behavior is an individuals' social class. Using data provided by the Uniform Crime Report [UCR], Flowers (1989) found that adults from the lower-class overwhelming had higher rates of criminal behavior than middle and upper class adults. What the data shows is that there is an inverse relationship between social class and crime (Flowers, 1989).

Criminologists such as, James Messerschimidt (2000), argue that gender is still the strongest predictor of criminal involvement. Gottfredson & Hirschi (1990) argue that men are more involved than women in criminal activity "always and everywhere" (as cited by Jones, 2006). Examining official statistics, Ronald Flowers (1989) found that 8 out of every 10 persons arrested in the United States is male. Flowers (1989) argues that men desire to be physically dominant and powerful, which is most easily demonstrated through acts of ag-

gression (Flowers, 1989). Age has increasingly been implicated in causing criminal behavior. Sampson & Wilson (2005) argue that nothing affects crime more than the number of young males present in a population. Flowers (1989) argues that almost all types of crime have an inverse relationship with age with the bulk of criminal involvement concentrated between the ages of 15 and 29 years old.

Based upon the previous research examined, I would expect to find a relationship between immigration and crime in Catalonia. I would expect the strongest relationship to be found among those populations that differ significantly when comparing race, socioeconomic status, age and gender demographics to native Spaniards.

Methodology

To evaluate the relationship between immigration and crime I used two different data sets, the Statistical Institute of Catalonia (Idescat) and the Mosso d' Esquadra (local police annual reports). I conducted a longitudinal study across a period of 5 years, beginning in 2003 through 2007 and the unit of analysis was the autonomous community of Catalonia.

To evaluate crime rates I used data provided by the annual crime reports of the Police of the Generalitat called the Mosso d' Esquadra. While it does include data on the age, gender and the country of origin of arrested individuals, it does not cross-tabulate between these three variables and therefore I was unable to analyze the possible influence of these variables.

The strengths in using the Idescat dataset are that it conducts population censuses on a yearly basis as compared to the census collected decennially by the Instituto Nacional de Estadistica (National Institute of Statistics, [INE]). It also records country-specific age and gender demographics for each foreign population in Catalonia for the 5 year period that I examine. By distinguishing the demographics for each population then, I am not only able to look at the relationship between age and gender in the immigrant population as a whole compared to Spaniards but I can examine differences in crime rates between immigrant populations

One important limitation to using the Idescat is its use of foreigner to be indicative of immigrant. Idescat defines foreigner to be to be anyone who is not a Spanish national and whose nationality follows that of their parents. Nationality in Spain is determined by blood right or *Jus Sanguinis*, and not by birthright or *Jus Solis*, like in many other countries (Idescat, 2009). Therefore, for statistical purposes this definition means not every foreign person is an immigrant in the traditional sense of the word or meaning born abroad. The effect of this is that it combines both the second generation immigrants who still maintain their foreign nationality and the first generation immigrants who were born abroad. Because Spanish law does not distinguish between these two groups and labels them both as foreign it demonstrates the lack of social, economic and political differences among them that in other countries might be statistically significant.

Another important limitation of this study is that because individual level data is unavailable, I will be using aggregate level data to draw conclusions about individuals' behavior. This creates the ecological inference problem which posits that there are a number of different relationships at the individual level that could be causing the observation that I would find at the aggregate level and so it proves difficult to argue that the relationship I observe actually represents real changes in the observations and not some other extraneous variable. While I understand the implications of such a problem in my results, I hope that regardless, the relationship I find will help to push further research to be conducted that

address this limitation.

Statistical Analysis

Dependent Variable: Crime Rate as measured by the total number of individuals arrested from a particular country of origin for a particular year (2003-2007) divided by the total number of individuals in Catalonia from that specific country in that specific year. This will yield an arrest rate represented as a percentage of the population from that specific country of origin who within the past year was arrested for some crime.

Independent Variables: Age and Gender Demographics and the Gross Domestic Product [GDP] were calculated for each immigrant population for their respective country of origin for each year between 2003 and 2007.

The age and gender demographics for each immigrant population were calculated using data provided by Idescat. The GDP was calculated by the International Monetary Fund [IMF]. The IMF calculates the GDP using the current prices for each of the national currencies and then they convert them to U.S dollars with the unit of analysis being billions so that the rates are comparable.

Using SPSS software I performed a simple correlation, partial correlation and linear regression between the dependent variable of crime rate and the independent variables of age, gender and GDP demographics.

Results

Using data provided by the Mosso d' Esquadra and Idescat, I first calculated the crime rate for each immigrant group and that of native Spaniards. A higher crime rate was found for every immigrant population in Catalonia as compared to that of native Spaniards for each year examined (Figure 1) thus demonstrating that contrary to my original hypothesis there seems to be in fact a positive relationship between immigration and crime in the case examined.

To examine the strength of the significance of the relationship between immigration and crime, using SPSS I performed a simple correlation between the independent variable of the country of origin for different immigrant populations (coded using dummy variables) and the dependent variable of crime rate measured as the percent of the population arrested for each of the years studied.

A strong positive relationship was found to be statistically significant among immigrants originating from Bosnia and Herzegovina with p equally 0.000. A positive relationship was found to be statistically significant among Georgian immigrants at the 0.01 significance level and among Angolan immigrants at the 0.05 significance level. Among all other immigrant populations the relationship between crime rate and immigration was found to be statistically insignificant demonstrating that certain immigrant groups are more strongly correlated with higher crime rates than others (Table 1).

I then performed a simple correlation using SPSS software between the independent variable of age and gender as measured by the percentage of men among the different age brackets and the dependent variable of crime rate (Table 2). A statistically significant positive relationship was found among men in the age brackets of 45 to 49 years and 50 to 54 years old at the 0.001 significance level. Among all other age groups the relationship was found to be statistically insignificant.

Using the partial correlation test, I was then able to examine the relationship between

immigration and crime while controlling for the possible influence of age and gender demographics and the Gross Domestic Product [GDP] of the different immigrant populations. A statistically significant positive relationship was still found among immigrants originating from Bosnia and Herzegovina and Angola at the 0.001 significance level and among Algerian and Gambian immigrants at the 0.01 significance level. A statistically significant negative relationship was found among Polish immigrants at the 0.01 significance level (Table 3). This suggests that among immigrants from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Angola, Algeria and Gambia, age and gender demographic variables as well as the economic variable of GDP do not seem to explain their increased crime rates with respect to that of native Spaniards and other immigrant populations.

Lastly using SPSS I performed a linear regression to further examine the significance of the relationship between crime and different countries of origins of immigrants with respect to Spaniards and to account for the possible influence of the demographic variables. I regressed the dependent variable of the crime rate measured as percentage of the population arrested in a given year with 38 different immigrant-sending countries coded using dummy variables as well as their age, gender and GDP demographics for each of the years between 2003-2007. This I hoped would allow me to evaluate the potential contribution of these demographics variables to the overrepresentation of immigrants in Catalonian crime rates.

The linear regression model used proved to be statistically significant at the 0.001 significance level, producing an F value of 13.895. The independent variables entered (country of origin, age, gender and GDP) into the linear regression also was found to account for 86.3% of the variance in crime rate among different immigrant groups when compared to that of Spaniards (R^2 =0.863). When examining the influence of the country of origin in the relationship to crime, a statistically significant positive relationship was found among 26 of the immigrant populations out of a total of 38 in comparison to Spaniards (Table 4). After controlling for the influence of disproportionate age, gender, GDP demographics among immigrant populations and for the differences in the years examined, I still found a significant relationship between different immigrant populations and their respective crime rates in Catalonia, Spain.

Immigrants from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Mali and Bangladesh had the highest increased chance of being arrested, equal to approximately 22%, when compared to native Spaniards. The two immigrant groups with the lowest positive relationship with crime was found among immigrants from Portugal and Uruguay, who had an approximate 3% increased chance of being arrested when compared to native Spaniards (Figure 2).

The previous percentages given all indicate the increased chances of immigrants from each country of origin of being arrested when compared to native Spaniards after the demographic differences in age, gender and GDP were controlled for. These results indicate that my original hypothesis was incorrect. A significant positive relationship was still found among different immigrant populations even after I controlled for their differences in age, gender and GDP in comparison to that of native Spaniards.

The only statistically significant negative relationship between crime and immigrants found was among immigrants from Great Britain [GB] at the 0.05 significance level. What this result suggests is that immigrants from GB when compared to Spaniards had a 5% decreased chance of being arrested.

When examining the possible role of disproportionate age and gender demographics among immigrants, surprisingly a significant negative relationship was found among men

between the ages of 20 to 24 years old. A B value of -1.117 was found, indicating immigrant populations whose population is more heavily concentrated within this age demographic actually have an approximate 1% decrease in a chance of being arrested when compared to native Spaniards. Similarly, a significant negative relationship with respect to crime was found among immigrants' populations with a higher concentration of its population falling between the ages of 35-39 equal to a 0.85% less likely chance of being arrested when compared to Spaniards. Interestingly, the two age demographic brackets found to have a significant positive relationship with crime was found among immigrant men between the ages of 45-49 who had an approximately 1.5% increased chance of being arrested when compared to Spaniards and among immigrant men between 50-54 years old who had an approximate 3% increased chance of being arrested when compared to Spaniards (Table 4).

To examine the possible influence of economic strain among different immigrant populations and its possible implications in a relationship to crime, I controlled for the GDP of each country of origin. What I found is that there was no statistically significant relationship between a countries' GDP and its respective immigrant population's crime rate in Catalonia (Table 4). The results suggest that the economic situation of a country of origin has no affect on the propensity of the individuals in its immigrant population to commit crime.

Conclusion and Limitations

Contrary to my original hypothesis, the results of this study have suggested that immigrant status is a significant factor in predicting criminal behavior among immigrant populations in Catalonia, Spain. In 26 of the 37 countries examined, a significant positive relationship was found among its immigrant populations and crime even after their age, gender and GDP demographics differences were controlled for. While significant differences were found between populations, those originating from Africa, Latin America, Eastern Europe and Asia had an increased chance of being arrested in comparison to Spaniards and other Western European immigrants.

The study also suggests that the proportion of middle-aged men within an immigrant population is also a significant predictor of an increased crime rates among that immigrant population. Therefore the results found challenge the findings of previous scholars, such as Flowers (1989), which argue that the majority of crime is committed by younger males and that engagement in criminal behavior typically declines with age.

Lastly this study challenges previous research, such as that conducted by Calavita (2005) and Stowell (2007), which argues that immigrants from poorer countries of origin are more likely to commit crime in the host country. No statistically significant relationship was found between a country's GDP and the crime rate of its respective immigrant population in Catalonia, Spain.

While I had hoped that the results I found would be able to directly challenge the media's portrayal of immigrant and restrictive government policies in Spain, the fact that I did find a relationship between immigration and crime does not confirm the legitmacy of such policies. Instead it demonstrates the need for further research into other variables that disproportionally affect immigrants such as unemployment, economic strain and quite possibly the role of the media and governmental policies in themselves that could be used to explain the relationship found.

The results from this study have important limitations. The results cannot prove definitively that immigrants are overwhelming more likely to be criminals; however what they

do suggest is that a relationship exists between immigrants and higher arrest rates. Whether this relationship can be explained by alternative variables such as police discrimination or harsh immigration laws is unknown but hopefully the questions that this study raises will encourage researchers to conduct further research into possibly why this relationship was found and its possible root causes.

Appendix A

Statistical Tests Results Tables

Table 1

Social Base of Country of Origin in Immigrant Crime Rate - Simple Correlation Analysis

Country of Origin	Pearson Correlation
Bosnia and Herzegovina	0.75***
Georgia	0.236**
Angola	0.185*

Source: Idescat (2003-2007); N= 178
*p<.05
**p<.01
***p<.001

Table 2

Social Bases of Age and Gender Demographics in Crime Rate - Simple Correlation Analysis

Percentage Men	Pearson Correlation
0-14 years	0.083
15-19 years	0.075
20-24 years	0.081
25-29 years	0.085
30-34 years	0.008
35-39 years	0.023
40-44 years	0.14
45-49 years	0.308***
50-54 years	0.363***
55-59 years	0.018
60-64 years	-.105
65+ years	-.076

Source: Idescat (2003-2007); N = 178
*p<.05
**p<.01
***p<.001

Table 3

Social Bases Country of origin in Immigrant Crime Rate, Controlling for Age, Gender and GDP - Partial Correlation analysis

Country of Origin	Correlation Coefficient
Bosnia and Herzegovina	.712***
Poland	-.216**
Angola	0.31***
Algeria	.260**
Gambia	-.243**

Source: Idescat (2003-2007); N = 159
*p<.05
**p<.01
***p<.001

Table 4

Social Bases of Immigrant Crime - Linear regression analysis

Variable:	B	SE
United States	-11.856	10.806
Poland	-1.320	1.65
Germany	-.931	2.639
Great Britain	-.5310*	2.365
Netherlands	-.469	1.752
Italy	1.004	2.174
Ukraine	1.411	2.017
Belgium	2.009	1.97
France	2.066	1.9
Uruguay	3.157*	1.571
Portugal	3.219*	1.46
Argentina	3.247	1.691
Lebanon	3.373	2.039
Georgia	4.686**	1.775
Chile	5.197**	1.589
Russia	5.483*	2.645
Peru	5.699*	2.219
Venezuela	8.977**	2.563
Columbia	9.348***	2.187

China	9.422***	2.607
Pakistan	9.661*	4.888
Gambia	10.053*	4.357
Brazil	10.350**	3.013
Senegal	11.176**	4.034
Ecuador	11.587***	2.193
India	11.972**	4.034
Romania	12.012***	1.94
Angola	12.275***	3.267
Bolivia	12.364***	2.773
Dominican Republic	12.368***	2.921
Morocco	13.514***	2.642
Nigeria	14.749***	4.001
Algeria	15.170***	4.19
Ghana	16.179*	6.173
Bosnia and Herzegovina	22.258***	1.943
Mali	22.330***	5.864
Bangladesh	22.551***	5.244
% men 0-14	-.374	0.38
% men 15-19	-.656	0.342
% men 20-24	-1.117**	0.331
% men 25-29	0.126	0.233
% men 30-34	0.113	0.253
% men 35-39	-.850**	0.313
% men 40-44	0.012	0.275
% men 45-49	1.496**	0.516
% men 50-54	3.095***	0.722
% men 55-59	1.04	0.964
% men 60-64	-.508	0.935
% men 65+	-.637	0.425
Gross Domestic Product	.001	.001

F= 13.895***
R^2 = .863
Source: Idescat (2003-2007); N = 217

*p<.05
**p<.01
***p<.001

Appendix B

Figures of Results

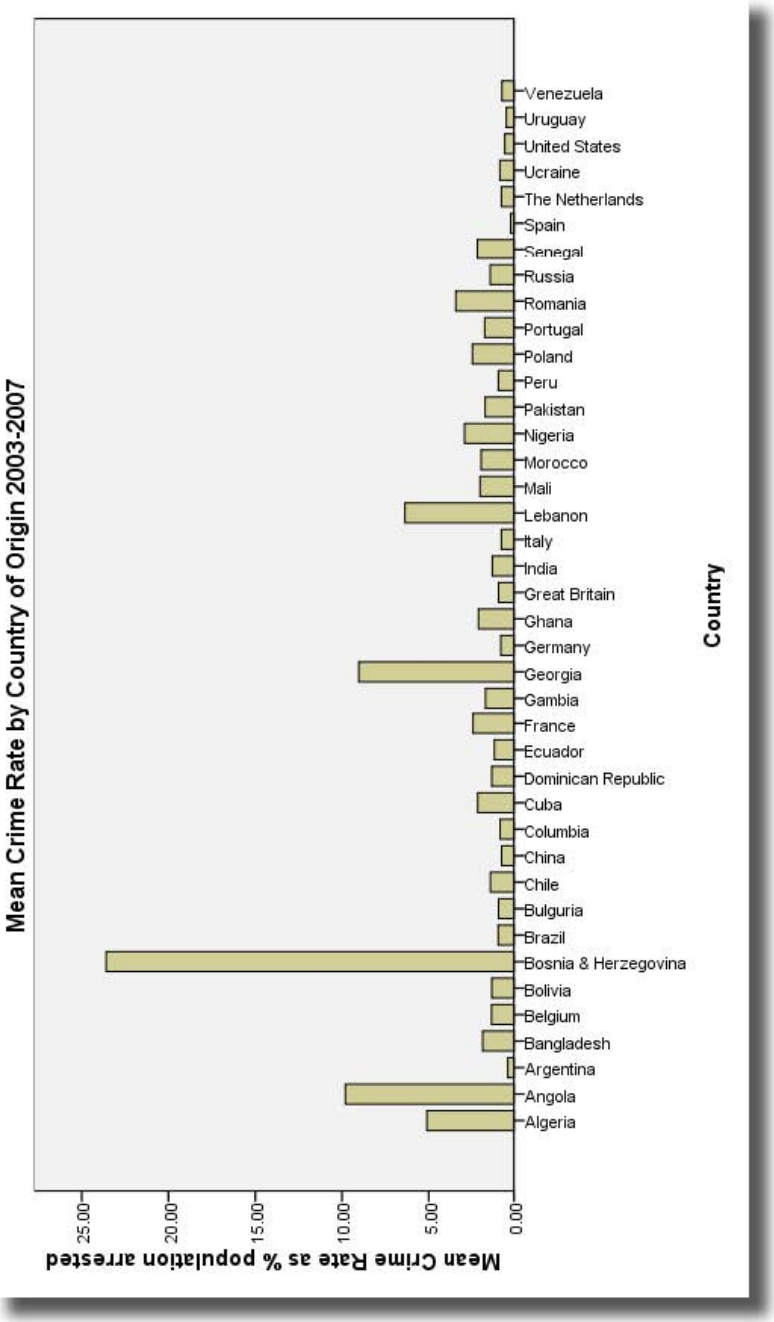

Figure 1: Mean crime rate measured as the percentage of the population arrested by country of origin in a given year between 2003–2007

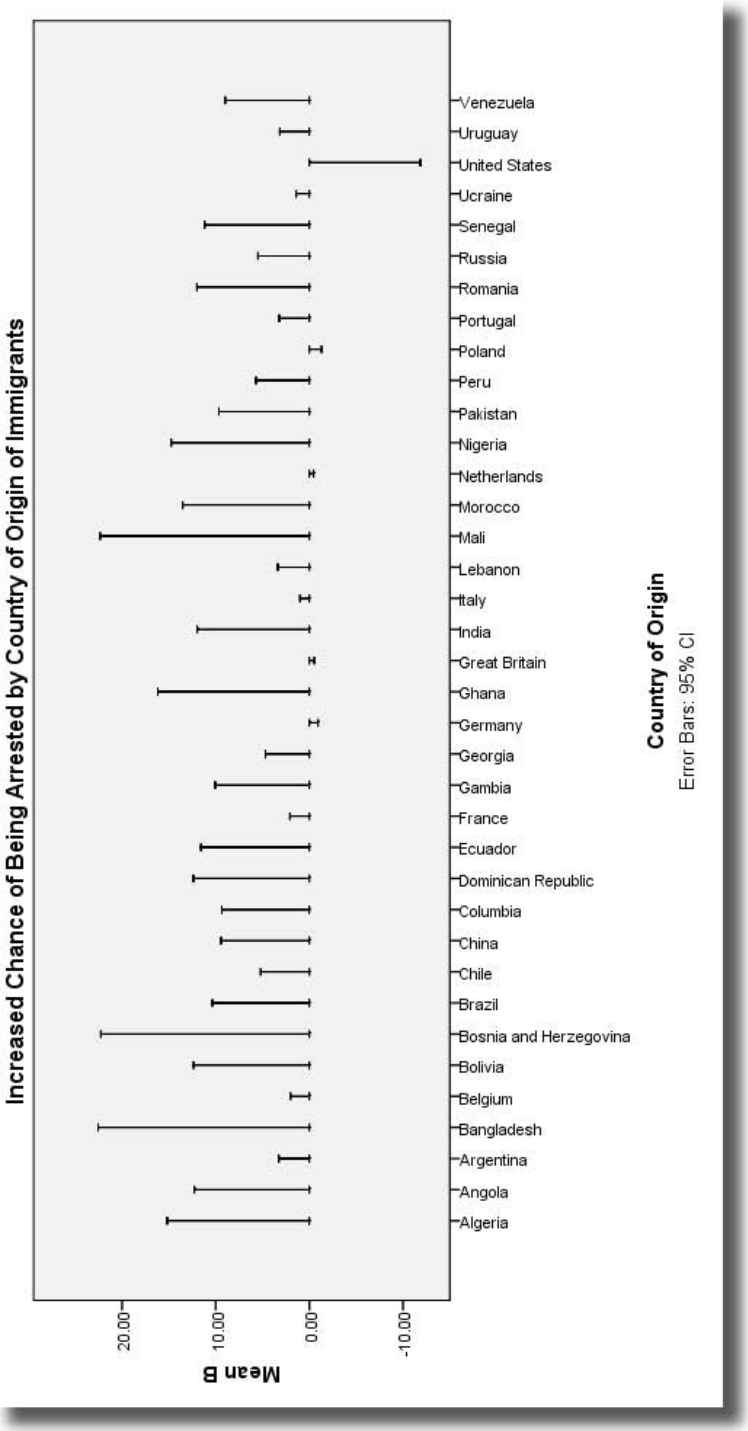

FIGURE 2: B-value generated using the linear regression model at 95% Confidence Interval interpreted to mean a specific immigrant population's increased chance of being arrested in comparison to native Spaniards after age, gender and GDP were controlled for.

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