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Contemporary Perceptions of Immigrants as Threats: Is the Perceived "Criminal Immigrant" Image Supported?

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CONTEMPORARY PERCEPTIONS OF IMMIGRANTS AS THREATS:
IS THE PERCEIVED "CRIMINAL IMMIGRANT" IMAGE SUPPORTED?

By

Rosa Elena Chang

A DISSERTATION

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<u>as Threats: Is the Perceived "Criminal</u>
<u>Immigrant" Image Supported?</u>

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This study examined Americans' perceptions of immigrants as threats and their implications on immigration policy views as well as immigrants' actual involvement in crime. Images of immigrant groups result from the perceived threats they pose to the crime rate, economy, political power, and nativism (Blumer 1958). I argued that these perceptions result in opposition to immigrants and support for stronger measures to exclude undocumented immigrants. Of special interest for this study was the "criminal immigrant" stereotype.

Previous studies demonstrate that immigrants are not highly crime-involved even when they experience additional stressors during their adaptation processes. Yet, according to Agnew's (1992) general strain theory, immigrants may be prone to criminality due to additional strains they experience while adjusting to the new country. However, many immigrants, through transnational activities maintain ties with family and friends overseas, thereby making the immigration experience less stressful. I argued in this study that immigrants' underinvolvement in crime is partly due to their transnational ties, which may serve a protective role as social support and thus condition the effects of strains.

To examine the implications for policy views of perceptions of immigrants and immigrants' actual crime involvement, the 2004 General Social Survey (GSS) and the

Children of Immigrants Longitudinal Survey (CILS) were used. The hypotheses were tested by conducting univariate, bivariate, and multivariate analyses.

Overall, perceived immigrant threat affects opposition to immigrants and support for stronger measures to exclude undocumented immigrants. Among the various groups examined, the levels of opposition to immigrants differ from that of support for stronger measures to exclude undocumented immigrants. In terms of immigrants and crime, immigrants were not disproportionately involved in crime, as is widely believed by the American public. Contrary to hypotheses, however, immigrants' strains were not significant predictors of crime, and transnational ties did not condition the effects of strains on crime.

It is recommended that future research be designed using more comprehensive data set(s) that represent and reflect the growing immigration population in the United States. Particularly, research should include measurements of micro-level social dynamics specific to immigrants such as additional measures of transnational ties and resilience.

To my parents,
Asan and Mei

and to my husband,
Jose

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"Nothing in this world can take the place of persistence.
Talent will not; nothing is more common than unsuccessful men with talent.
Genius will not; unrewarded genius is almost a proverb.
Education will not; the world is full of educated failures.
Persistence and determination alone are omnipotent."

-Calvin Coolidge
President of the United States of America

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Immigrants and non-immigrants are group categorizations employed to distinguish populations in the United States. In general, individuals not born in but residing within the United States and its territories are considered immigrants; those born and residing in the United States and its territories are referred to as non-immigrants or native-born Americans. Immigrant groups are socially constructed as one of the minority groups in American society and are therefore subjected to oppression and alienation. Similar to other minority groups, contemporary perceptions of immigrants in the United States tend to be dualistic. On one hand, there is the outlook that immigrants achieve the American dream, as illustrated by stories of successful immigrants (Portes and Rumbaut 2006). On the other hand, there are a host of negative images and perceptions about immigrants, such as being welfare dependents, job takers, and individuals who are highly criminogenic (Hagan and Palloni 1999; Martinez and Valenzuela 2006; Rumbaut and Ewing 2007).

In the United States, immigrants are usually not welcomed with open arms (Bloemaraad 2002). Instead, they have been treated mostly as commodities needed to fill essential positions in the labor market (Parrenas 2005), and only those who are deemed "worthy" in terms of educational attainment or occupational skills are accepted into society (Ong 2003). Since before the 1920s, immigration scholars have examined and written about anti-immigrant sentiments in the United States. Although the social, political, and historical contexts are currently different, negative perceptions of immigrants and immigration remain the same. Moreover, negative perceptions of

immigrants have intensified after the terrorist attacks that occurred on September 11, 2001 (9/11) (Inda 2006).

The 9/11 attacks on the Twin Towers, the Pentagon, and the attempted attack on the White House re-awakened Americans' anxieties and fears toward immigrants, as illustrated by the passage of stronger exclusionary measures to control immigration flows (Ceyhan and Tsoukala 2002). Anxiety in U.S. society is due in part to the perceptions that immigrants pose a threat to the American economic and political systems, the crime rate, and to American identity (nativism) (Inda 2006; Martinez 2002). Espenshade and Belanger (1998) found that the trends in anti-immigration views were similar to those of the unemployment rate, especially during the period of 1975 to 1995.

The misperception that immigrants are criminals is in part due to the fact that there are some immigrants who enter the United States through illegal means or overstay their visa. These actions are framed within the post-9/11 socio-political context as an assault against the law and thus perpetuating the "criminal immigrant" stereotype (Rumbaut and Ewing 2007). In the contemporary immigrant discourse, the labels "illegal immigrant" or "illegal alien" are constantly being assigned to individuals violating immigration status laws (e.g., overstaying past the expiration date of entry visas or entering the United States through illegal means). A second pervasive post-9/11 label for immigrants is that of "terrorist criminals" since the attacks were perpetuated by individuals not born in the United States (Inda 2006). Labels of "illegal immigrants," "illegal aliens," and "terrorist criminals" allow for the social construction of the "criminal immigrant" stereotype for both documented and undocumented immigrants in the United

States. These labels, usually assigned to the undocumented, are often generalized to those immigrants who are documented as well (Inda 2006).

In addition to these negative labels, the manner in which government officials enforce immigration laws and the reasoning behind the enactment and the enforcement of these laws in order to control immigration flow helps perpetuate the perceptions that immigrants are highly criminogenic. For example, in the wake of 9/11 especially, the Immigration and Naturalization Services (INS) was severely criticized for mishandling law enforcement, visa granting, and visa processing, which resulted in the U.S. government restructuring it. As a consequence, the administration of President George W. Bush placed INS under the newly created Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and renamed it U.S. Citizen and Immigration Services (USCIS). This restructuring further enhanced anxieties and perceptions of immigrants as a threat to the security of American society (Inda, 2006; Mautino 2003).

According to Blumer's group threat theory (1958), contemporary perceptions of immigrants as threats lead to opposition to immigrants. In the post-9/11 social-political context, changes in legislature (or lack thereof) are being encouraged, which impact immigrant groups negatively. For example, during the 2008 presidential elections in Florida the majority of voters did not support an amendment that would eliminate an outdated exclusionary provision of the Florida Constitution that was originally created in 1926. This provision authorizes the Legislature to control and limit land ownership by "aliens ineligible for citizenship," which was mainly created to target Japanese and keep them from owning and inheriting property when they first arrived in the 1920s. Those opposing the striking of this outdated provision believe that if it is eliminated, lawmakers

would have one less tool to fight immigration. The failure to pass this amendment during the Florida elections makes it the only state with such an outdated and discriminatory provision (Keller 2008). Similarly, anti-immigrant groups have advocated for stronger measures to control and exclude immigrants already in the United States. For example, anti-immigrant groups are pushing for federal legislation to reduce federal anti-terrorism funding to cities and states that have sanctuary policies. Sanctuary policies prohibit law enforcement agencies from asking about the immigration status of individuals who have not committed a crime. The ultimate goal of these policies is to create a safe environment for undocumented immigrants to report a crime, either as victims or witnesses (Tramonte 2009). The opposition towards such policies is in part due to the assumption that they offer free rein for immigrants (especially undocumented immigrants) to commit crime and that immigrants are not being punished for crimes they do commit. However, there is no scientific evidence to show that there is a direct positive relationship between sanctuary policies and levels of crime or between these policies and non-punitive legal actions toward immigrants.

The rhetoric and the image of "criminal immigrant" have permeated throughout the rest of society such that it has become a myth that many native-born Americans of any race and ethnicity tend to believe (Martinez and Valenzuela 2006). These images fuel the perceptions that immigrant groups present a threat, which leads to both opposition to all immigrants and support for stronger measures to exclude undocumented immigrants in the United States. Moreover, these negative images are sometimes even adopted by certain immigrants, who are referred to as PULLAM—"pull the ladder after me" (Portes

and Rumbaut 2006). Like some in the native-born population, this group opposes the arrival of immigrants (Sassen 1998).

The alliances between native born and some non-native born Americans obscure the reality that immigrants who come to the United States, either for economic or other reasons such as fleeing persecution, are not aliens who intend to commit crime. Most immigrants, no matter their ethnic background, who come to the United States seeking a better way of life or refuge, are non-criminals (Mullen 2005). The contemporary negative perceptions and discourse about immigrants demonstrate that U.S. society is not yet ready to fully accept immigrants. Therefore, it is more likely that immigrants will face discrimination in the United States because the negative discourse is embedded in all social and political institutions. The high probability of being discriminated against adds another hurdle to the lives of immigrants when adapting and trying to integrate into U.S. society. This means that immigrants would have to cope with strain resulting from discrimination in addition to the strains resulting from language barriers, economic difficulties, immigration status issues, and separation from home and family (Aranda 2007; Coutin 2000; Portes and Rumbaut 2006; Waldinger 2001).

According to Agnew's (1992, 2001) general strain theory, these additional strains should place immigrants at greater risk of being involved in crime than native-born Americans. However, the results of previous studies demonstrated that it is not the case. In fact, immigrants are often under-involved in crime relative to the native born population (Lee et al. 2001; Lynch and Simon 2002; Martinez 2002; Martinez and Lee 2000; Martinez and Valenzuela 2006; Rumbaut and Ewing 2007). A possible explanation

for immigrants' lower involvement in crime may be their participation in transnational behaviors and the resulting social ties they forge.

Through transnational activities, immigrants can better maintain their ties with family, friends, and their country of origin, and thereby make the moving experience less dislocating and disruptive. Transnational practices of maintaining ties with family, friends, and country of origin are not new or specific to a certain immigration wave but have been occurring for a long time (Basch, Glick-Schiller, and Szanton- Blanc 1994; Glick-Schiller 1999). Immigrants' transnational behaviors are manifested in tangible activities such as traveling to and sending remittances to the country of origin, as well as in less tangible activities such as sending letters to relatives and keeping abreast of news about their home country through mass media such as television and the World-Wide-Web (Basch, Glick-Schiller, and Szanton-Blanc 1994). Transnational immigrants still feel part of a social field that involves having one foot in the new country and the other one in the country of origin (Levitt and Glick-Schiller 2004). Through their involvement in transnational patterns of living, immigrants forge transnational ties (Kivisto 2001), which may serve as a protective role and as social support, thus conditioning the effects of their strains (Agnew 1992, 2001).

In the contemporary U.S. society, negative perceptions of undocumented immigrants are more abundant than positive perceptions; and these same perceptions are often applied to documented immigrants as well as the undocumented immigrants (Inda 2006). The negative contemporary perceptions and images, such as the "criminal immigrant," are perpetuated and enhanced by the usage of negative labels in immigration discourse and the restructuring of the INS after 9/11. These perceptions create a social

environment in which immigrants are more likely to be discriminated against. The anti-immigrant discriminatory context is an additional strain that immigrants have to cope with when adapting to U.S. society. This makes adaptation processes more difficult because immigrants already face strains such as language barriers and legal status related to their immigration experience. The strains immigrants face may lead them to criminal involvement. However, participation in transnational activities may provide them with a buffer against strain and crime involvement.

RESEARCH PURPOSE

This study had two purposes. The first was to examine the effects of contemporary perceptions of immigrants as threats on immigration policy views. The second purpose was to examine immigrants' actual involvement in crime. The first purpose was framed within the group threat theory (Blumer 1958). In brief, according to the group threat theory, images of groups derive from the perceived threat certain groups pose to the self-defined dominant group. Thus, this study examined the factors associated with immigration policy views, specifically the effects of perceptions of immigrants as a threatening group on opposition to immigrants and support for stronger measures to exclude undocumented immigrants. The second purpose of this dissertation was to examine the micro-level factors associated with crime involvement of immigrants. In particular, I sought to understand why, despite unique strains that should increase the likelihood of involvement in crime, levels of crime among immigrants are typically not higher than those of the native-born. The potential protective effects of transnational ties were examined as a possible explanation for this paradox.

RATIONALE AND SIGNIFICANCE

By applying the group threat theory (Blumer 1958), this study contributes to the growing related literature by examining negative perceptions of immigrant groups and immigration policy views, not only on the part of White Americans but also of minority groups. Thus, the results are expected to contribute to the body of literature that examines and discusses perceptions of immigrant groups held by some native-born Americans and by a number of non-native born Americans.

Many scholars in the criminology and immigration fields discuss the negative images of immigrants as a preamble to their research but only few studies have actually explored perceptions and the group threat theory using data collected after September 11, 2001 (Brader, Valentino, and Suhay 2008). Studies such as Brader et al.'s and such as this study are important because they can provide greater understanding of the factors associated with opposition to immigrants (both documented and undocumented) and views about immigration policy, especially in an anti-immigrant, tension-laden social-political context. Also, these studies can provide greater insight into the inaccurate stereotypes, including that of the criminal immigrant, are still prevalent in the United States.

Using Agnew's general strain theory (1992, 2001) as a framework, this study also examined whether immigrants' strains were associated with their crime involvement. Studies examining immigration and crime have analyzed immigrants' criminality by using official crime data (Martinez 2005; Rumbaut and Ewing 2007) and data (Rumbaut 2006). These studies concluded that immigrants are not disproportionately committing more crime than the native-born population, and they have hypothesized about possible

factors related to immigrants' under-involvement in crime (Martinez and Valenzuela 2006; Rumbaut and Ewing 2007). However, few studies have actually examined these factors. Thus, to contribute to the understanding of immigrants' involvement in crime, this study also sought to address why immigrants may be disproportionately less involved in crime despite the stressors and strains deriving from their immigration and adaptation processes. One factor that may play an important role in this paradox is transnationalism. While some theoretical approaches, notably Agnew's (1992, 2001) general strain theory, suggest that immigrants' strains should be more likely to engender greater delinquent and criminal activity, this may not be the case because of immigrants' participation in transnational activities.

The bonding that immigrants forge through transnational activities and how the resulting connections may condition the effects of their strains are an aspect about immigrants not examined previously when studying the relationship between immigration and crime. Transnationalism and transnational activities are commonly assessed within the immigration literature, but much of the research on the relationship between crime and immigration does not consider the social dynamics of immigrants' transnationalism. It is essential to not overlook these activities when studying immigrant groups because they are common aspects of living for them (Basch et al. 1994). Also, few of the studies analyzing the issue of crime among immigrant groups have combined criminological theories with immigration concepts (Nielsen and Martinez 2006; Martinez and Lee 2000; Morenoff and Astor 2006). Therefore, this study is expected to contribute to reducing the existing gap in both the immigration literature (race/ethnic/immigration) and the criminology literature by advancing an integrated theoretical understanding of

immigrant crime. This study offers insights into the social dynamics that take place in immigrants' lives and their relation to crime by analyzing social behaviors and interactions that are more or less exclusive to immigrants. This may provide greater understanding of reasons why immigrants are often under-involved in crime relative to the native-born population.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Immigrants tend to face racial discrimination and anti-immigrant sentiments from the host society. I argued that anti-immigrant beliefs stem from the perceived threats posed by immigrants to the crime rate, economy, political power, and nativism (Blumer 1958; Hagan and Palloni 1999; Inda 2006). Using the group threat theory as basis, I attempted to answer the following questions concerning perceptions of immigrant groups and immigration policy views: How do perceived threats to the crime rate, economy, political power, and nativism affect opposition to immigrants in general and support for stronger measures to exclude undocumented immigrants? Do these effects vary by race and immigration status?

In addition to reception and adaptation difficulties, the immigration process itself is usually considered a dislocating experience and thus newcomers may have higher levels of strain than native-born Americans. Due to the strain, immigrants may be more prone to be involved in crime than the native-born population (Agnew 1992, 2001). However, research demonstrated that immigrants are not over-involved in crime (Martinez and Valenzuela, 2005). In this study, the implications of Agnew's general strain theory for immigrants and children of immigrants were tested. Additionally, the role of transnational activities as conventional social supports was examined because they

could facilitate immigrants' adaptation process (Kivisto 2001), and may play a protective role by insulating them from the strains that can engender criminality (Agnew 1992, 2001). Taking into consideration these issues, I addressed the following general questions related to immigration and crime: Are immigrants more crime involved than the native-born? What is the association between strains and crime involvement among immigrants? Do transnational ties mediate the effects of strain on crime for immigrants?

ORGANIZATION OF REMAINING CHAPTERS

Chapter 2—Theory and Literature Review—provides an in-depth discussion of relevant theories and literatures underlying pertinent issues and current research as well as the research questions and the study's hypotheses. Chapter 3—Data and Methodology—presents descriptions of the two different data sets and of the various statistical analysis procedures conducted to test the hypotheses. Chapter 4—Results for Perceptions of Immigrant Groups as Threats and Immigration Policy Views—contains the results of univariate, bivariate, and multivariate analyses conducted to assess the association between perceived threats and immigration. The results of univariate, bivariate, and multivariate analyses conducted to assess indicators and mediators of immigrants' involvement in crime are presented in Chapter 5—Results for Immigrants' Involvement in Crime. Chapter 6—Conclusion and Discussion–summarizes key results, discusses theoretical implications, study's limitations, suggestions for future research, and presents concluding summaries.

CHAPTER 2

THEORIES AND LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter discusses the theoretical frameworks and reviews the relevant literatures for this dissertation. The first section of the chapter provides an overview of the contemporary perceptions of immigrants as threats. This section contains a brief background on immigrants and immigration in the United States, a summary of Blumer's (1958) group threat theory, discourse about immigrants in contemporary U.S., and an assessment of prior research related to Blumer's theory. In the second section of this chapter, Agnew's (1992, 2001) general strain theory of crime is outlined along with a review of pertinent research. The second section also provides a description of immigrants' strains and their potential effects on crime, an overview of the transnationalism concept, and an explanation of the possible effects of transnational ties on crime.

CONTEMPORARY PERCEPTIONS OF IMMIGRANTS AS THREATS

At present, immigrants comprise about 10% of the U.S. population and it is predicted that the number of immigrants will be greater than that of native-born Americans by the 2050s (U.S. Census 2004). Immigrants have been and will continue to be an important component of the American population. Although U.S. society has overall accepted immigrants through the years, some groups have expressed social, political, and economic concerns through support for more immigration enforcement, opposition to providing social service benefits to immigrants, and rejection of policies that will allow entry and permanent residency for both documented and undocumented immigrants in the United States.

Overview of Immigration and Immigrants in the United States

All individuals in the United States, with the exception of Native Americans, can trace their roots back to another country of origin or even to several other countries. Despite this fact, some Americans oppose immigrants and immigration. Laws controlling the flow of immigrants into the United States usually take two divergent approaches. That is, they allow immigrants from some countries to freely immigrate into the United States, but other policies have excluded some groups from doing so (Bloemraad 2002; Fairchild 1917). The two types of laws sometimes operate independent of each other but also sometimes concurrently. For instance, the exclusionary act of 1921 was not a zero immigration act; on the contrary, the United States still received immigrants who met limited exceptions such as accepting wives of already settled male immigrants but not other family members (Danier 2008). Mass immigration started in the colonial era, when immigrants from European nations arrived and claimed land within the boundaries of what was to become the United States. Since then, immigration to the United States has been marked by several important waves (Benson and Hermsen 2004; Danier 2008), and continues through the present time. The two key waves of immigration are pre-1920 and post-1965.

The first massive immigration wave began prior to the year 1920 when the United States did not have any significant restrictions limiting the number of newcomers. During this time, immigrants were arriving primarily from England, Scotland, Germany, Ireland, and from African countries as slave labor. By the year 1920, the United States was host to over 14 million immigrants who had arrived during the previous 20-year period. However, with anti-immigrant tensions building among some native-born Americans,

this wave slowed down with the passage of exclusionary acts such as the Emergency Quota Act in 1921 and the National Origins Quota Act in 1924, which limited entry to specific nationality groups such as Asians (mostly Japanese) and Eastern and Southern Europeans. The restrictions implemented in the 1920s decreased the number of immigrants to about eight million over the 40-year period between 1921 and 1960. During the late 1940s, after World War II, the number of immigrants increased in small numbers due to the enactment of laws that allowed entry to refugees escaping war. Although the U.S. government passed some of the inclusionary acts during the 1940s and 1950s, it also enacted new exclusionary laws such as the McCarran-Walter Act of 1952, which, as with the Act of 1924, also excluded immigrants of Asian origin (mainly Koreans). The concurrent passage of inclusionary and exclusionary acts during the 1940s and 1950s kept the number of immigrants low (Danier 2008). Thus, the number of immigrants entering the U.S. did not increase until after the ratification of an inclusionary act in 1965.

In 1965, Congress repealed the National Origins Act of 1924 by passing the Immigration and Nationality Act. The 1965 act eliminated quotas based on national origin, and thereafter, immigrants began arriving into the United States en masse. The post-1965 arrival of newcomers is known as the second key wave of mass immigration (Benson and Hermsen 2004; Daniels 2007). The approval of the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965 was mostly due to the social and political changes occurring during the 1960s. The act was created to rectify previous discrimination of immigrants on the basis of their nationality. America as a society was undergoing a movement that prioritized citizens' civil rights, and therefore any policies excluding or discriminating

against certain groups were not supported. The repeal of the National Origins Act of 1924

allowed more access to a wide range of immigrant groups such as Latinos and Asians

(Benson and Hermsen 2004). Additionally, it allowed entry of other groups who are

classified as refugees and asylees[1] from the continents of South/Central America, Asia,

Africa, and Europe (Johnson, Farrell, and Guinn 1997). In addition to the diverse groups

arriving in the United States, the number of immigrants in the second wave increased

with the passage of the Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) of 1986. IRCA

contained an immigrant worker program, which allowed entry to many immigrants from

Central America, especially from Mexico. It also granted amnesty to immigrants already

in the United States, which allowed many undocumented immigrants who arrived before

1982 to apply for citizenship. As of 2000, the number of documented immigrants who

arrived in the United States since 1961 was about 24 million (Benson and Hermsen

2004).

Enacting both inclusionary and exclusionary laws, sometimes concurrently,

demonstrates that U.S. society has gone through different phases in terms of accepting

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[1] Asylees are individuals who are granted the status of asylum in the United States. The United States
Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) defines asylum as:

> A form of protection that allows individuals who are in the United States to remain here,
> provided that they meet the definition of a refugee and are not barred from either
> applying for or being granted asylum, and eventually to adjust their status to lawful
> permanent resident.
> Every year, thousands of people come to the United States in need of protection because
> they have been persecuted or fear they will be persecuted on account of their race,
> religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion. Those
> found eligible for asylum are permitted to remain in the United States.
> Unlike the U.S. Refugee Program, which provides protection to refugees by bringing
> them to the United States for resettlement, the U.S. Asylum Program provides protection
> to qualified refugees who are already in the United States or are seeking entry into the
> United States at a port of entry. Asylum-seekers may apply for asylum in the United
> States regardless of their countries of origin. There are no quotas on the number of
> individuals who may be granted asylum each year (with the exception of individuals
> whose claims are based solely on persecution for resistance to coercive population
> control measures) (www.uscis.gov, accessed June 2008).

and rejecting immigrants. The 1920s were known for excluding certain immigrant groups, an approach which lasted through the 1930s. The inclusion of immigrants began with the 1940s and slowly built up to policy changes that occurred during the 1960s and 1980s, which allowed the mass immigration of different immigrant groups, mainly Latinos and Asians.

As the population of immigrant groups are increasing, negative perceptions of immigrants, are increasing as well, especially after 9/11 (Benson and Hermsen 2004; Inda 2006; Martinez and Valenzuela 2006). This is especially the case for undocumented immigrants. For example, in 2006, the Pew Research Center for the People and the Press reported that 53% of those who participated in a nationwide poll agreed that undocumented immigrants should be returned home and 40% believed that levels of documented immigration should decrease. The negative rhetoric concerning immigrants is facilitated by a number of Americans' and some non-Americans' perceptions that immigrant groups present threats to the crime rate, economy, political power, and to nativism (Blumer 1958).

In general, Blumer (1958) argued that prejudicial images of groups emerge from the perceived threat posed to the self-defined dominant group in society by a subordinate group. Since its development, the theory has been tested with different populations in the United Sates and Europe, and many studies have found results supporting it (Bobo and Hutchings 1996; Bobo and Tuan 1995; Diamond 1998; Esses, Jackson, and Armstrong 1998; King and Wheelock 2007; McLaren 2003; Quillian 1995; Wilson 2001).

Blumer's Group Threat Theory

Group threat theory was first developed by Blumer (1958) as a means to explain racial prejudice. The main tenet of the theory is that racial prejudice results from a sense of group position and not as an innate characteristic found in individuals. Writing from a sociological perspective, Blumer attempted to shift the focus of the study of prejudice from individuals to groups in order to identify the social dynamics involved in defining and redefining a racial group and ultimately to understand the foundations of prejudice.

According to Blumer (1958), racial prejudice results from four different feelings that the self-perceived dominant group possesses about groups it perceives as subordinate. Those include: (1) feelings of superiority, (2) feelings that the subordinate group is different, (3) feelings of entitlement in important areas of life, and (4) feelings that the subordinate group poses a threat to the dominant group. The first, feelings of superiority, describes that the dominant group believes it is better. The second, feelings that the subordinate group is different, explains the common feeling that "they [subordinate groups] are not of our kind" (Blumer 1958:4). Although the first two feelings are always present in the dominant group, prejudice does not derive only from them. Instead, the third and fourth feelings must also be present in order for racial prejudice to exist.

These four types of feelings also indicate the manner in which racial groups are arranged in their respective hierarchy. For example, the first feeling indicates that the subordinate group is *below* because the dominant group is superior. The second feeling positions the subordinate group *beyond* the dominant group because it is alienated; not having entitlement in society (the third feeling) isolates the subordinate group. The

dominant group distances itself from the subordinate group for fear of its dominant position being threatened (the fourth feeling). The feelings among the individual members of a group may vary somewhat, but they posses the same general feelings toward other groups. These general feelings among members of a group bind them together through interactions with each other, leading to a shared and common sense of group position and of belonging.

Since Blumer (1958) adhered to the school of symbolic interactionism, a central premise in group threat theory is that the development of social constructs such as group identity, group perceptions, and group positions emerge out of interactions between and among groups and individuals. Through interactions and shared common feelings among members, groups create their racial identification and sense of group position *vis-à-vis* other groups. By sharing the sense of group position and belonging, groups forge stronger ties among themselves and develop even more similar individual beliefs and positions concerning other groups. This social dynamic allows individual group members to ground their position in society and provide them with the sense of their group's position (Blumer 1958).

Group position is perceived in relation to other groups and derives from the ongoing social dynamics of the dominant group while defining and redefining the subordinate group and the relationship between the two. It transcends individuals' feelings because it is a sentiment found in the collective group that reflects its position in relation to other groups. Moreover, it is not set in stone but rather is versatile in nature. Position does not represent the objective relationship between racial groups but it reflects sentiments concerning the position each racial group is believed to hold in the social

hierarchy. It is crucial for providing groups with a race framework to gauge others' identities, images, and positions (Blumer 1958).

The foundation of racial prejudice is thus found in the groups' social dynamics of racial self-identification and conceptions of other groups' identities and images. The sense of group position is used as a framework to form racial identities and images of other groups. Since each group defines itself by its characteristics and relations with other groups, their identities are based in part on the experiences and interactions between groups. Therefore, the social construction of group identities varies according to experiences and interactions. These dynamics entail a "collective process" involving feelings and social interactions within and between groups. During this collective process, groups also define their hierarchical position in society as well as those of other groups (Blumer 1958).

A group usually develops a sense of dominant position because its members have a feeling of entitlement for the resources, power, and prestige present in society. The defining of a group as subordinate occurs when members of the dominant group come in contact with one another and voice their views of and ideas about the subordinate group. The ideas articulated by members of the dominant group fuse together and create a collective abstract image of the subordinate group. This image is also imbued with abstract categories of race. The image created by the dominant group is abstract because it does not usually emerge just out of individual contacts but also from rhetoric found in public arenas such as legislative assemblies and the mass media. The events and dialogue that take place in these public arenas hold a level of importance because the places themselves are viewed as important (e.g., Congress). Consequently, the discussions

occurring in these arenas play an extremely strong role in determining the sense of group position, particularly when they are of a negative nature (whether explicit or implicit) toward the subordinate group. Moreover, the key figures during these public discussions exercise significant influence in defining racial groups because these individuals usually belong to elite powerful groups, which seek to protect only their own interests at the expense of the subordinate groups (Blumer 1958). Thus, prejudice emerges from the collective processes of the dominant group as well as in more private interactions and discussions, which are often filled with negative rhetoric about the subordinate group that is perceived to be a threat to privileges and resources. According to Bobo and Fox (2003), "prejudice emerges from competition and struggle over real or symbolic resources and privileges" (p. 323).

The ultimate goal is for the dominant group to retain its privileges and its position as the dominant group. Prejudice is used to accomplish this goal. Racial prejudice is considered to be a defense mechanism against perceived threats groups pose to the high status position held by the dominant group (Blumer 1958; King and Wheelock 2007). Additionally, members of subordinate groups may share the same sense of entitlement as the members of the dominant group. Thus, when sharing the same sentiments of the dominant group, members of subordinate groups may believe themselves to belong to the dominant group, and "they will automatically come under the influence of the sense of position held by that group" (Blumer 1958:5). By believing that they belong to the dominant group, they share similar patterns of beliefs and thereby treat other subordinate groups and their members with the same derision as does the dominant group. This argument indicates that minority groups could have the four feelings identified by Blumer

and perceive themselves as the dominant group. For example, minority groups may perceive themselves as the dominant group *vis-à-vis* immigrants and thereby view the latter as inferior, alien, not having any entitlement, and as threatening. The social construction of immigrants as part of the out-minority group is enabled through interactions among group members in which they communicate their own individual characterizations of members of minority and immigrant groups (Blumer 1958; Bobo 1999).

The immigrant situation in the United States may be an example of the social dynamics that Blumer (1958) explained, especially since September 11th, 2001. The United States has a long history of viewing immigrants with apprehension, especially when they arrive en masse. Immigrants are often viewed and perceived by many groups (dominant and subordinate alike) as threats to different socio-political aspects of society. These perceptions are heightened by the fear of terrorism and the unstable economic situation in the United States.

Immigrants in the Contemporary United States

Non-acceptance of immigrants by some groups in the United States was evident in the creation of stronger exclusionary anti-immigrant policies and polarized opinions about the federal immigration reform bills during the year 2006. Other indications of concern about the growing immigrant population are the perceived immigrant threats to the economy, political power, crime rate, and nativism. These perceived threats are heightened by the unstable economic situation in America today and by the perceptions that immigrants take away jobs, that immigrants are criminals, welfare dependents and are not assimilating linguistically (Johnson et al. 1997, Portes and Rumbaut 2006, Sassen

1998). Based on Blumer's (1958) theory, the perceived threats affect opposition to immigrants and immigration.

These stereotypes of immigrants – as job takers, as criminals, as welfare dependents – are unfounded. While studies do not provide strong support for the argument that immigrants take away jobs from native-born individuals and produce lower wages, part of the American public still widely believes this notion (Portes and Rumbaut 2006; Wilson 2001). A second pervasive perception is that immigrants take great advantage of social services, such as welfare, while they do not contribute to the tax basis for these services (Borjas 1999; Portes and Rumbaut 2006). Studies examining this specific issue show mixed results, with some indicating that the number of immigrants receiving public assistance decreases when controlling for those who have refugee status (Huber and Espenshade 1997). Moreover, other studies have shown that undocumented immigrants actually contribute to public revenues through their tax payments (Eisenhauer, Angee, Hernandez, and Zhang 2007; Passel 1994, as cited in Huber and Espenshade 1997; Vernez and McCarthy 1996). Overall, American society still perceives immigrants to be one of the main reasons for the government spending too much money on social services. This leads to support for decreasing undocumented and documented immigrants' access to social services. For instance, the Welfare Reform Act and the Immigration Reform Act of 1996 limited the eligibility of immigrants' access to social services by making citizenship[2] a requirement for receiving some of the services (Huber and Epenshade 1997).

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[2] Documented immigrants in the United States are not all legal 'citizens.' They become eligible after holding a legal resident card for some years and are able to apply for 'citizenship,' which is the legal process of become a 'naturalized citizen.' This requires immigrants to pass a test as required by the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (Benson and Hermsen 2004; USCIS).

The perception that the government spends a large amount of money on public services for immigrants is one of the aspects that comprise nativism among some Americans (Sanchez 1997). Nativism, according to Higham (1974), is,

> Intense opposition to an internal minority on the ground of its foreign (i.e., "un-American") connections. Specific nativistic antagonisms may, and do, vary widely in response to the changing character of minority irritants and the shifting conditions of the day; but through each separate hostility runs the connecting, energizing force of modern nationalism. While drawing on much broader cultural antipathies and ethnocentric judgments, nativism translates them into a zeal to destroy the enemies of a distinctively American way of life. (p. 4)

Patterns of nativism have existed since the first immigration wave before the 1920s, and they have been characterized by various and different anti-immigrant stereotypes. Currently, nativism in American society is characterized by the perception that immigrants are welfare recipients and other sentiments related to the "ideal" of multiculturalism and non-English languages. The ideology of a multicultural society refers to the foreign-born population's ability to retain its own culture and language while adopting and adjusting to American culture, including learning English. This ideology provides grounds for some individuals to believe that the new wave of immigrants will keep their own culture and language, which threatens the national identity of the American (Sanchez 1997). Questions of membership and national identity usually arise when discussing immigration reforms and foreign-born individuals in the United States (Huber and Espenshade 1997; Sanchez 1997).

Who is considered "worthy" of being a member of American society? Who is "American" in the United States? Those who are accepted into society are those who assimilate into the image of a "bourgeois individual" (Ong 2003), which reflects the notions of a successful English-speaking American not in need of social service

assistance. The concern that immigrants will not quickly adapt to the nation's culture if they are welfare recipients is one of the arguments used to support immigration reforms that reduce their social service benefits. Many support the idea of having the status of citizens as a criterion to receive some public benefits. They argue that those who are not citizens do not believe in and support the American way of life and are therefore not worthy of receiving such benefits (Huber and Espenshade 1997).

These criticisms of immigrants have led to an increase in applications for "naturalized citizenship" status by documented immigrants in order to be able to vote and ensure involvement in the passage of reforms that directly affect them (Huber and Espenshade 1997; Sanchez 1997). However, this noticeable increase in immigrants' political involvement has, at some level, contributed to the prejudices about them because it heightens fear that immigrants are a threat to the political well-being of the United States. Immigrants are perceived as threats because many do not share the common identity of successful English-speaking Americans and because they are thought of as competitors for scarce economic resources and political power. Thus, immigrants are not part of the *in-group*; instead, they are cast as the *out-group* that threatens the position of the in-group (Esses, Jackson, and Armstrong 1998). The social construction of immigrants as part of the out-group is enabled through interactions among members of the dominant group in which they communicate their own individual characterizations of members of the minority and immigrant groups (Blumer 1958; Bobo 1999). Also, members of a minority or subordinate group can have interactions with members of the dominant group resulting in shared patterns of beliefs and thus treating newcomers as the dominant group would (Blumer 1958).

Literature Review of Group Threat Theory

The premises of perceiving other groups as competing for the same social resources, as well as other principles of Blumer's theory, have been tested by several scholars with U.S. and European samples (Bobo and Hutchings 1996; Bobo and Tuan 1995; Esses, Jackson, and Armstrong 1998; McLaren 2003; Quillian 1995; Wilson 2001). Moreover, since the groups that perceive subordinate groups as threats do not necessarily have to be the White dominant group, some of the studies also examined other non-dominant groups' beliefs towards the perceived subordinate group (Bobo and Hutchings 1996; Esses et al. 1998; Wilson 2001). The findings of such studies largely supported the central tenets of Blumer's (1958) group threat theory.

Whether prejudice (as explained by Blumer 1958) results from the perceived competition that groups present to each other has been assessed by Quillian (1995). Quillian evaluated group threat theory using the results of a survey and also cross-national data from Europe that contain measures of beliefs towards immigrants. Quillian was specifically interested in evaluating prejudice as a result of collective threat felt by the dominant group. He found that prejudice among the socially dominant group was strongly related to the perceived threat that minority groups, particularly immigrant groups, posed in the studied communities.

In other research, scholars used group threat theory to examine support for or opposition to policies created to assist minority groups and for increasing money spent on programs (e.g., school busing) benefiting minority groups (Bobo and Tuan 1995; Wilson 2001). These studies were premised on the group threat theory argument, which indicates that groups feeling entitled to resources would view minorities as competition, and thus

would not support policies and programs perceived as providing an advantage to minority groups to better compete for resources and power. Using local survey data, Bobo and Tuan examined the role of perceived group threat on support for Chippewa treaty rights. The authors found that the community was more likely to oppose state policies and treaty rights when the perceived group threat was high. Similarly, using the 1994 General Social Survey to study beliefs towards immigrants and immigration policies, Wilson (2001) found that Americans were more likely to oppose immigration and immigration policies when they perceived that immigrants were a threat to employment, economic well-being, and national unity. Recently, King and Wheelock (2007) studied the relationship between perceived group threat and punitive beliefs. Using Blumer's (1958) theory as a framework to examine punitive beliefs and beliefs toward criminal punishment, they found that Whites were more punitive when they perceive that Blacks as a group were a threat to economic resources.

The aforementioned literature (Bobo and Hutchings 1996; Bobo and Tuan 1995; Esses, Jackson, and Armstrong 1998; McLaren 2003; Quillian 1995; Wilson 2001) considered factors such as collective threat and aggregate demographics in order to examine beliefs toward minorities and immigrants within the framework of Blumer's (1958) group threat theory. Moreover, most of the aforementioned studies examined Whites' beliefs toward Blacks, with the exception of Wilson (2001). These studies have shown support for group threat theory's premises by predicting White's beliefs toward minority groups (Bobo and Hutchings 1996; Wilson 2001). On the other hand, the results of studies evaluating minority group beliefs—such as those of Latinos, Asians, and African Americans—towards other minorities have been mixed. Additionally, there are a

few studies which examined Whites' and Blacks' beliefs towards immigration and immigration policies using Blumer's group threat theory (Bobo and Hutchings 1996; Diamond 1998; Esses et al. 1998; Wilson 2001).

Without testing any specific theory, Diamond (1998) evaluated the opinions of Blacks and Whites toward immigration. He compared 14 national opinion polls and found that Whites were more likely than Blacks to agree to decrease the number of immigrants coming into the United States. Diamond acknowledged the low response rate of Blacks as one of his study's limitations. Esses et al. (1998), using a Canadian college student sample and group conflict as the theoretical framework, found that when there are low resources, such as job availability, there was more opposition toward immigration. Bobo and Hutchings (1996) argued that group threat theory could be extended to examine minority group perceptions of other groups as threats. According to Bobo and Hutchings, Blumer (1958) stated that prejudice is affected by historical context. Based on this, the authors argued that a group's history of discrimination, isolation, and disenfranchisement influences its likelihood of perceiving other groups as threats. Bobo and Hutchings found that groups that have been historically more alienated were more likely to perceive other groups as threats when compared to their White counterparts. For example, they found that Blacks and Latinos were more likely than Whites to perceive Asian groups as threats. Bobo and Hutchings concluded that their results were "complex" but that the premises delineated in group threat theory provide a strong explanation for their findings.

When analyzing the versatility of prejudice and the sense of group position set forth by Blumer (1958), it can be argued that such positions refer to how one group perceives itself to be positioned relative to other groups. Blumer argued that prejudice is

not static but is flexible, and perceptions of group position can change depending on the historical and political context of the society in question. Of particular concern in the present study is that after the September 11, 2001 incidents in the United States, already present anxieties about immigrants have heightened and thereby perceptions of immigrants as threats create a more conflict-charged environment (Sanchez 1997) to which immigrants have to adjust. Also, if immigrants are perceived as threats, groups already established in society will be likely to develop more negative images about immigrants in order to keep them from encroaching upon other group positions. The feeling of entitlement among the native-born population is stronger in this case because immigrants are perceived as "un-American" and therefore not worthy of receiving any American benefits (Sanchez 1999). Immigrants are thereby perceived as threats by those groups who feel that the resources in American society belong to them and not to the newcomers who have not yet invested in this country (Bobo and Hutchings 1996; Sanchez 1999; Wilson 2001).

As such, minority groups may well view immigrants as threatening and subordinate. Not many scholars have studied Blumer's (1958) premise that members of a subordinate group may feel as if they belong to the dominant group and treat other minorities accordingly. One study examining this premise was conducted by Bobo and Hutchings in 1996. According to Bobo and Hutchings, Blumer's theory can contribute to the group threat literature by arguing that Blacks as a group feel entitled to what is available in society due to their long history of slavery in relation to other minority groups and immigrant groups, and they would therefore see themselves as the dominant group relative to immigrants. Additionally, based on Blumer's theory, it could be argued

that non-native born individuals in the United States (but who are long-term U.S. residents) may perceive themselves as the dominant group in relation to other immigrants. The non-native immigrants who perceive other immigrants as threats have adopted the negative images embedded in U.S. society and are thus more likely to oppose immigrants and support stronger anti-immigration reform (Blumer 1958; Portes and Rumbaut 2006; Sassen 1998).

In sum, racial prejudice in American society is embedded in the social dynamics of groups who are seeking to obtain and maintain the dominant position in the hierarchy. The subjectivity of the sense of group position enables not only Whites to feel they are the dominant group but other minority groups as well. Thus, immigrants as newcomers are incorporated in the struggle for power and often end up in the bottom of the hierarchy. Being below other groups, immigrants are subjected to oppression, discrimination, and alienation. In order to maintain immigrant groups in the subordinate position, groups above immigrant groups express hostilities against immigrants and support measures and reforms that would exclude immigrants.

Based on group threat theory and the reviewed literature, the following hypotheses were tested:

Hypothesis 1: Perceptions of immigrants as threats are related to opposition to immigrants, as shown by the beliefs of the American public that the number of immigrants to America should decrease.

Hypothesis 2: Blacks and members of other race/ethnic groups have less opposition to immigrants than Whites.

Hypothesis 3: Immigrant groups have less opposition to immigrants than the native-born population.

Hypothesis 4: Perceptions of immigrants as threats are related to support for stronger measures to control undocumented immigrants, as shown by the beliefs that America should take stronger measures to exclude illegal immigrants.

Hypothesis 5: Blacks and members of other race/ethnic groups have less support for stronger measures to exclude undocumented immigrants than Whites.

Hypothesis 6: Immigrant groups have less support for stronger measures to exclude undocumented immigrants than the native-born population.

It has been argued that immigrants find themselves a discriminatory social environment in United States. The contemporary anti-immigrant sentiments and tension-laden social-political context in American society contribute additional strains to those already experienced by immigrants when trying to adapt to new lives. According to general strain theory (Agnew 1992, 2001), individuals who experience strains from three different sources use crime as a possible mechanism to cope with strains. However, findings from different studies encourage further examination of the relationship between immigration and crime in order to find out if the perception of immigrants as being highly criminogenic is supported as well as to seek to understand factors associated with immigrants' involvement in crime (Lee, Martinez, and Rosenfeld 2001; Lynch and Simon 2002; Martinez 2002; Martinez and Lee 2000; Martinez and Valenzuela 2006; Rumbaut and Ewing 2007).

IS THE "CRIMINAL IMMIGRANT" IMAGE SUPPORTED?

Following the arguments of general strain theory, it could be concluded that immigrants would have a higher rate of crime involvement than native-born Americans. Yet, several studies indicated that immigrants were not over-involved in crime (Lee et al. 2001; Lynch and Simon 2002; Martinez 2002; Martinez and Lee 2000; Martinez and Valenzuela 2006; Rumbaut and Ewing 2007) although reasons for this are not well understood. Thus, Agnew's (1992, 2001) general strain theory (GST) was used to examine immigrants' level of crime involvement, paying particular attention to conventional social support as a conditioning factor between strain and crime. Additionally, the concept of transnationalism was utilized to examine the effects of immigrants' transnational ties as a potential mediator of the relationship between strain and crime. In particular, as discussed below, transnational ties were expected to be an important source of social support that mediates the effects of strains on crime among immigrants.

Agnew's General Strain Theory (GST)

General strain theory has its root in Merton's (1938) anomie theory. Robert K. Merton developed this theory in 1938 in his seminal paper titled "Social Structure and Anomie." Merton argued that in the United States, there are cultural goals embedded in society, but not everyone has equal access to the legitimate opportunity structure to be able to attain these goals. In the United States, one of the key cultural goals is to achieve economic success, which is usually represented by money and material possessions. However, there is a disjuncture between the economic goals and the legal means to attain them, such as education and job opportunities. In the face of the macro-level disjuncture

between goals and legitimate means, individuals who feel strain or anomie may turn to illegitimate means to attain those goals. According to Merton (1938), crime is one of the five adaptations (specifically innovation) to strain in which individuals may engage to deal with it.

Following Merton's (1938) classic statement, strain theory has undergone important modifications and developments. For example, Cloward and Ohlin (1960) emphasized the importance of having access to illegitimate means as a significant factor for crime involvement, while Messner and Rosenfeld (2001) focused on how the disproportionate emphasis on the economy to the detriment of all other institutions may help explain the high homicide rate in the United States. An important theoretical development for this study is Robert Agnew's (1992, 2001) General Strain Theory of Crime. Figure 2.1 shows Agnew's general strain theory.

Agnew (1992, 2001) identified micro-level factors that can cause strain or stress and that may lead to involvement in delinquency or crime. He explained that strain theory should extend to consider other strain-inducing factors in addition to money, such as the social environment and exposure to other individuals who are deemed criminals. Strain in general is defined by Agnew (1992) as the condition felt by individuals who do not believe they are being treated the way they should be treated. Agnew (2001) further explained that strain could be objective and/or subjective. Objective strains are events or conditions that are seen as strenuous by the majority of the group. Thus, when a person is experiencing an objective strain, it is perceived as an adversity by the majority of individuals in the group to which he or she belongs. For example, lack of basic needs such as food, shelter, and clothing is abhorred by all people. Objective strains can be the

same for several groups or society as a whole, but there are some strains that vary among different groups. For instance, immigrants may experience strain related to their adjustment to American society and culture, whereas the native-born do not. Conversely, objective strains can also become subjective strains because each individual might experience strains differently. Subjective strains are those events or conditions that are perceived as strenuous by the person who is experiencing them. Thus, two persons from the same group might be experiencing the same event or condition (objective strain), but one person may subjectively view it as more stressful than another person.

Figure 2.1 Agnew's General Strain Theory (1992, 2001)
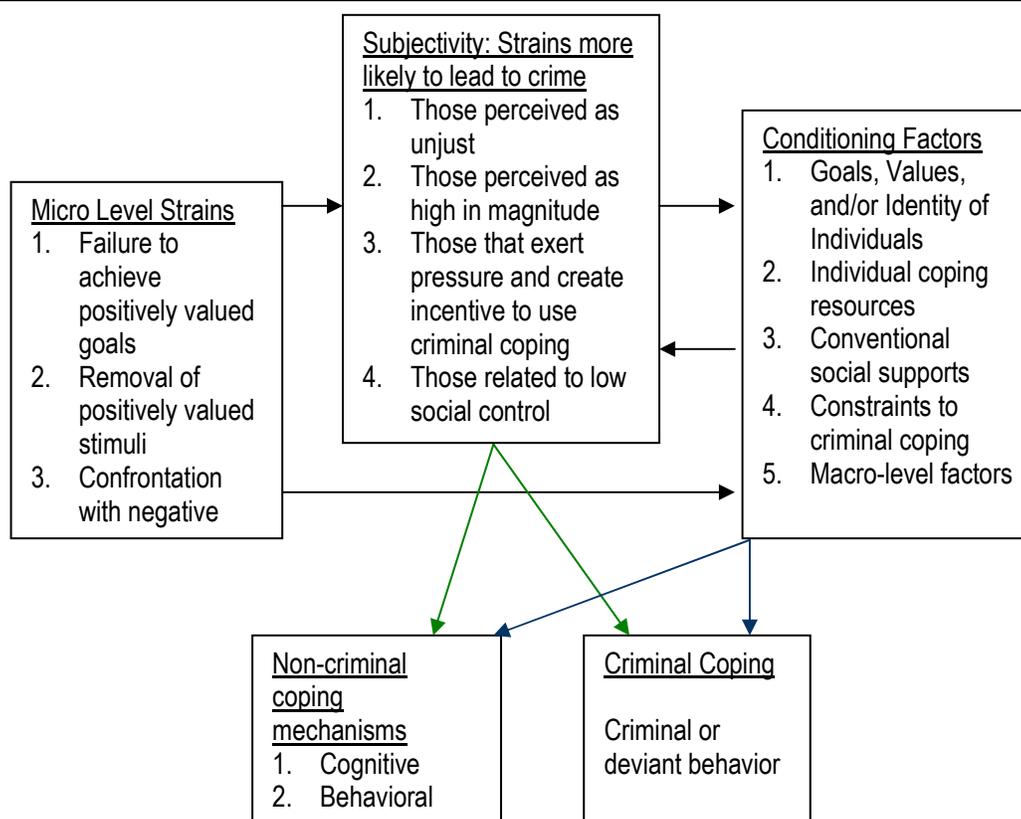
Agnew (1992) identified three main sources of strain that can lead to deviant and criminal behaviors. The three situations from which strain may derive are when

individuals fail to achieve positively valued goals, when positively valued stimuli are removed from individuals, and when individuals confront negative stimuli.

- *Failure to achieve positively valued goals*. There are three subtypes of strains within the category of failure to achieve positively valued goals. These include strains resulting from (1) the disjunction between aspirations and actual achievements, (2) the disjunction between expectations and actual achievements, and (3) the disjunction between just or fair outcomes and actual outcomes. The first type of strain includes the classic arguments of Merton's anomie/strain theory; that is, strain results from individuals failing to achieve, among other things, economic goals such as money but it also includes more immediate goals such as status and respect. The second type of strain indicates that each individual has different expectations and this type of strain is not necessarily embedded in society's culture. The third type of strain refers to individuals believing that the actual outcome was not fair or just. This is decided by taking into consideration the equity of the distribution of resources, the level of input individuals provide, and through comparisons made with other similar individuals. Overall, the failure to achieve positively valued goals leads to anger, which may lead to crime involvement.

- *Removal of positively valued stimuli*. Individuals can experience strain when they lose contact with an agent or institution that provided positive stimuli. For example, an individual may experience strain due to the loss of a person with whom the individual had a close relationship or because of loss of an object due

to crime. Agnew (2001) explained that involvement in crime could occur when individuals try to avenge the lost person or recover the lost object.

- *Confrontation with negative stimuli*. Strain can be the result of individuals facing negative situations without the possibility of escaping them. For example, an individual who is involved in an abusive relationship with no alternative but to endure it, such as a child being the victim of parental physical abuse, is confronting a negative stimulus. Experiencing this type of strain may lead to involvement in crime when individuals attempt to escape or avoid it, terminate or decrease it, seek revenge against the source of the negative stimulus, and cope with it by using illegal drugs. If these efforts do not result in the extinction of the negative stimulus, individuals could feel anger due to the continuing confrontation with this strain, which may lead to criminal involvement.

However, the strains resulting from these three sources (removal of positively valued stimuli, failure to achieve positively valued goals, and confrontation with negative stimuli) will not necessarily result in individuals engaging in criminal activities. This is in part due to people having choices to engage in different non-criminal coping mechanisms when adapting to strain (Agnew 1992, 2001). The three types of non-criminal coping mechanisms that individuals tend to practice in the face of strain are (1) cognitive, (2) behavioral, and (3) emotional. Also, individuals might use more than one of these strategies either simultaneously or in sequence (Agnew 1992). Employing coping mechanisms tends to help reduce the likelihood that people experiencing strain will engage in crime.

- *Cognitive coping mechanisms.* Individuals use rationalization to cope with the strain. It may occur in three different forms: (1) minimizing the strain by reducing the importance of the goal (e.g., lowering the importance of money); (2) maximizing positive outcomes while attempting to ignore the negative outcomes by lessening the value of the goal (e.g., decreasing the actual pre-defined amount of money desired) or by claiming that the outcome is not as terrible when compared to other outcomes; and (3) accepting the outcome as fair by minimizing the adversity of the strain (e.g., believing that the amount of money obtained was small because their efforts to obtain it were not that substantial).

- *Behavioral coping mechanisms.* Individuals take action and actively look for positive stimuli or to rid themselves of negative stimuli. The actions taken could be criminal or non-criminal. For example, while trying to escape an abusive home, an adolescent might choose a non-deviant behavior such as moving-in with relatives or a deviant behavior such as running away from home. Also, individuals might take revenge against the person they blame for the negative stimulus. Taking revenge could be criminal or non-criminal but the potential for criminal behavior is higher. Vengeful behavior occurs because individuals want the person who is being blamed to have negative outcomes, lower positive outcomes, or put more effort into obtaining his or her goal.

- *Emotional coping mechanisms.* These are strategies that individuals could use in order to actually lessen the negative feelings caused by the adversity. For instance, individuals could turn to physical activities (e.g., working out) or use meditation methods to divest themselves of the negative feelings. Another

possibility is when individuals become involved in religion or increase their religious involvement in order to decrease the negative emotions and feelings that could lead them to resort to crime.

The second reason why strains do not always lead to criminal involvement is because the subjective perception of strain varies among individuals. Agnew (2001) explained that strains are more likely to lead to crime if they are perceived as unjust, if they are perceived as high in magnitude, if they exert pressure and create incentive to use criminal coping behavior, and if they are related to low levels of social control.

- *Strains perceived as unjust*. When a condition or event is seen as unjust, it elicits anger among individuals, which in turn increases the probability of using crime as a coping mechanism to strain. Anger is the most influential emotion for crime (Agnew 1992, 2001), and it usually develops when individuals blame others for what is occurring to them, which can lead to the desire for revenge. Additionally, anger is a strong emotion that should not be excluded from crime research because crimes, especially violence, tend to elicit emotions such as anger and lust (Carmichael and Piquero 2004).

- *Strains perceived as high in magnitude*. Strains are seen as high in magnitude when they result in high degrees of stress, when the stressful events or conditions are long in duration, when strains are recent, and when strains threaten central goals, needs, values, activities, and identities. Perceptions of strains as being high in magnitude differ among individuals. Those who perceive strains as high in magnitude will be more inclined to use crime as a response to the stressful event or condition.

- *Strains that exert pressure and create incentive to use criminal coping behavior*. In certain circumstances, there are social pressures to respond to strains with crime, which then may provide an incentive to continue the criminal behavior. For example, if an adolescent is being bullied in school and there are social pressures to respond with violence, the adolescent would be more likely to do so, especially if there is the incentive of earning more respect and stopping future bullying incidents.

- *Strains related to low levels of social control*. Based on Hirschi's (1969) social control theory, Agnew (2001) explained that there are strains that result from low levels of social control, specifically low social control through low commitment and low attachment. The low levels of social control can lead to stressful conditions and events. For example, people rejected by family exhibit low attachment and people working in the secondary labor market elicit low commitment. These two conditions or events related to low social control induce the types of strains that are more likely to lead to criminal involvement. Similarly, stress may result from high social control such as stern parental supervision and long working hours in jobs. However, these strains are less likely to lead to using crime as an adaptation to stress because the cost of crime is greater than the benefits. In the case of immigrants in the United States, there is usually an involuntary relationship with a controlling body of authority, the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services. This association may exert some control over immigrants and it may actually deter immigrants from involvement in criminal activities because otherwise the cost would be deportation and losing the

opportunity to remain in the United States. Moreover, high social control is associated with the conventional social support and the necessary information, instruments, and emotional support that enable use of non-criminal adaptations to strains.

The subjectivity of perceiving adversities as stressful is affected by micro- and macro-level factors. These factors may affect the choice of coping mechanism and condition stressful events by alleviating the level of strain and thus decreasing the likelihood of criminal involvement. The factors are as follows:

- *Initial goals, values, and/or identities of the individual*. Individuals who place vast importance on their goals, values, and identities are more likely to resort to crime when trying to cope with strain because when they are unable to achieve goals the stress and disappointments are greater than for others.

- *Individual coping resources*. There are some personal traits that can influence the sensitivity of strains and the choice of coping strategies by affecting the ability to engage in such strategies. For example, individuals with high self-esteem are less likely to respond to strain with crime because this trait is related to higher resistance to stress. Also, individuals with high self-efficacy are more likely to choose a non-criminal coping strategy over crime.

- *Conventional social support*. Joon Jang and Lyons (2006) defined social support as intimate personal relationships among people with whom individuals interact. Previous studies testing general strain theory defined social support as being highly committed to and involved with family, friends, and religion, among other measures. These types of social support offer ties that help alleviate stressful

events by providing moral and material support and by facilitating the use of non-criminal coping strategies. Conventional social support provides individuals with "information" to cognitively cope with strains, with instruments to access non-criminal behaviors (e.g. access to temporary shelter to avoid negative stimuli) when coping with strains, and with emotional support to reduce the negative feelings that result from experiencing adversities. The "information" supplied by conventional social support provides individuals with the feeling that they are loved and valued, and with the feeling of belonging (House 1981, as cited in Agnew 1992; Vaux 1988, as cited in Agnew 2001). Having ties to conventional social institutions protects individuals from adversities and stressful events and thus it is more likely to result in individuals choosing non-criminal coping mechanisms over crime and deviant behaviors when facing difficult situations.

- *Constraints to criminal coping*. There are some individual choices that constrain them from resorting to crime. For example, individuals would not usually engage in crime if they have more to lose than to gain because of criminal acts (Clarke and Cornish 1985, as cited in Agnew 1992), if they have high levels of social control (Hirschi 1969, as cited in Agnew 1992), and if they do not possess the appropriate means to commit criminal acts (Agnew 1991, as cited in Agnew 1992).

- *Macro-level variables*. There are four factors in the social environment that can influence the effects of strains and the choice of coping strategies. First, the cultural and social context determines the importance of goals, values, and identities. For example, in U.S. society and culture, having money and status is

highly valued. This emphasis on money and status may lead to more stress for individuals who do not have them. Second, perceptions of stress are influenced by the social environment; thus, some adversities might be more stressful for some people. For example, according to the subculture of violence theory, those living in urban areas are taught that insults and provocations are symbolic of disrespect and thus highly unpleasant, which leads to higher levels of stress (Wolfgang and Ferracuti 2003). Third, individuals might not have the ability to resort to cognitive coping when trying to adapt to strain because they are constantly fed definitions of failure and achievement, which makes it challenging to choose to cognitively minimize the strain. For example, the accomplishments and failures of those who live in urban areas are usually publicly known, which exerts more pressure on the individuals and makes it more difficult to cognitively channel the stress induced by failures (Faunce 1989, as cited in Agnew 1992). Fourth, individuals in some social environments may find it difficult to legally escape encountering negative stimuli. For example, adolescents in the urban underclass might be more likely to respond with criminal behaviors when adapting to strain because of the many factors and constraints found in their environments (e.g. poor educational school system).

The disposition to choose either criminal or non-criminal behavior when responding to strain is due to several factors. These include individuals' temperament, from previous reinforcement and punishment of past delinquency, from society's definition of the appropriate response to confrontations with others, and from the manner in which individuals attribute the adversity to other people. Additionally, these factors are

more influential for the decision to resort to criminal behavior when individuals have more associations with criminals than with non-criminals, peers, and family.

In sum, three main types of adversities cause micro-level strains that can lead to criminal behavior if they are perceived as stressful enough by individuals experiencing them. The perception of these stressful events is conditioned by micro- and macro-level factors. Additionally, these conditioning factors affect the type of non-criminal coping mechanisms individuals use in place of criminal coping strategies. Immigrants may experience additional strains when adjusting and adapting to the U.S. society, as well as some of the same strains that native-born Americans experience. Therefore, immigrants may go through the same dynamics of dealing with adversities as explained by Agnew (1992, 2001). However, immigrants have something most native-born individuals do not: transnational ties.

As discussed below, the area of conventional social support is where transnationalism may play an initial role in limiting immigrants' involvement in crime. In addition to forming new relationships in the host country, immigrants also interact with their family and friends in their country of origin. Transnational ties, as a type of conventional social support, can offer immigrants the material and emotional support needed to engage in non-criminal coping behaviors over criminal and deviant behaviors. This is because transnational ties provide information to cognitively cope, instruments to engage in non-criminal behaviors, and emotional support to alleviate stressful and difficult situations.

Literature Review of General Strain Theory

Previous empirical studies showed varying results when testing the efficacy of general strain theory of crime (GST). For example, the most common results were related to the premise that strains can cause anger, which leads to higher crime and delinquent involvement, but the results for the roles of coping mechanisms and conditioning factors of strains were not consistent (Baron 2004).

Mazerolle and Piquero (1997) measured several positive stimuli as well as some negative life events and found that strain-inducing factors can lead to criminality. Brezina (1996) found that delinquency resulted as an adaptive response to anger. Capowich, Mazerolle, and Piquero (2001) used a random sample of university students and found that situational anger was associated with violent criminal behaviors. Baron (2004) found ten of the examined strains (emotional abuse, physical abuse, sexual abuse, violent victimization, relative deprivation, and monetary dissatisfaction) led to anger and that this anger was positively related to crime.

Several studies have examined the role of conditioning factors for crime involvement. Among the studies with results supporting the theory's arguments about conditioning effects, Mazerolle and Maahs (2000) found that moral constraints serve as conditioning factors for involvement in crime. Following Agnew's (2001) argument that self-esteem affects sensitivity to strain, Baron (2004) found that high self-esteem was related to criminality, but it was positively related to crime − the opposite direction predicted by general strain theory.

The effects of strain on crime as well as the manner in which conditioning factors affect the positive relationship between strain and crime for both males and females has

also been examined. Baron (2007) analyzed whether conditioning factors such as self-esteem, self-efficacy, external attributions, deviant peers, and deviant beliefs impacted crime involvement. The overall results showed that conditioning factors impacted criminal involvement and that the impact differed by gender. Similarly, using a foreign population of South Korean youths, Morash and Moon (2007) examined gender differences in the effects of strain on crime and in the mediating effects of conditioning factors on the strain-crime relationship. As with previous studies examining conditioning factors, Morash and Moon also included self-esteem. Although conditioning effects were significant in explaining variance in status offenses, the authors found no gender differences in the mediating effects of the conditioning factors on other types of offenses.

Among the aforementioned studies discussed, self-esteem was the common conditioning factor. Another conditioning factor analyzed in the GST literature is the mediating effect of social support in the strain and crime relationship. Agnew (1992, 2001) posited that social support is one of the conditioning factors influencing decisions to resort to crime as a way to deal with strain. As with other conditioning factors, results supporting the role of social support have been mixed. For example, in a study using a sample of college students, Mazerolle and Piquero (1997) did not find that social support, as a conditioning factor for strain, affects the level of crime involvement. In a similar study, Capowich et al. (2001) examined whether social support affects individuals' choices of criminal or non-criminal behaviors when adapting to strain-inducing adversities and anger. They found that networks such as social support do not have significant effects on using crime as an adaptation to strain.

Two studies have found that social support is important Joon Jang and Lyons (2006), using an African American sample, found some support for the theory's argument regarding social support. The authors defined social support as "having intimate, personal relationships through social networks made up of other people with whom he or she interacts" (p. 253-254). Specifically, they found that social support can buffer the effects of negative emotions on withdrawing behaviors such as not wanting to see or talk to anyone. According to the authors, the result implied that individuals with social support are less likely to resort to "non-constructive" strategies such as crime. In a similar study, Robbers (2004) examined the moderating effects of social support and how these effects differ by gender. Using data from the National Youth Survey, Robbers found that social support moderated the positive relationship between failure to achieve goals and crime. Additionally, when examining gender differences, the author found that social support was significant among females but not among males.

Most of the aforementioned studies reviewed utilized samples that under-represent minority groups. This is an important consideration given the current study's focus on examining general strain theory in the context of a minority population. Using samples that include minority groups is important in order to advance understanding of the theory and to gauge group differences in types of strain and conditioning factors. However, only a few studies have tested general strain theory using samples comprised of substantial numbers of minority group members (Kaufman 2005; Joon Jang and Lyons 2006; Morash and Moon 2007). Notably, Kaufman (2005) found that witnessing crime and being victimized were strain-causing adversities associated with greater likelihoods of criminal involvement among Latinos and Blacks, especially for those living in

disadvantaged contexts. Another population not commonly examined in tests of general strain theory is immigrants. The current study examined the efficacy of general strain theory in the context of an immigrant population and assessed crime conditioning factors such as transnational behaviors and relationships that provide forms of social support.

Immigrants' Strains

Immigrants experience the same kinds of strains as the native-born. However, immigrants are exposed to a number of unique strains that may be crime inducing. Unlike native-born Americans, immigrants undergo social experiences while adapting to the United States. While adapting to a new country, immigrants (including their children) find themselves facing adversities such as learning a new language, finding employment, and immigration status issues (e.g., the long and complicated process of applying and waiting for legal status). The process of immigration itself is dislocating, and the process of adaptation to a new country is not always an easy one, especially in Western societies after September 11th, 2001 (Ceyhan and Tsoukala 2002).

While immigrants adapt to their new lives and learn a new language, they and their children are faced with adjustment and coping difficulties (Aranda 2007), which may well be strain-inducing. One of the most severe adversities is economic instability (Waldinger 2001). Immigrants enter into a bifurcated U.S. society with the economy looking more like an hourglass with the middle class almost disappearing (Waldinger 2001; Zhou 1997). In terms of job skills, the characteristics of the new wave of immigrants is extreme as well; one group enters with high-skills and has access to the top layer of the labor market and the other comes into the low-skills poorly paying jobs at the bottom of the hourglass. The latter group is not able to move up and out of the low-

paying jobs or to advance economically, despite often being employed. Frequently, these immigrants find themselves mired in the secondary labor market (Waldinger 2001). This situation is in part due to their limited job skills and language barriers in U.S. society. Because of limited skills and education, immigrants often cannot access the economic and education realms that can pull them out of poverty, placing them at a higher risk of experiencing all the social disadvantages related to economic deprivation such as poor quality schools, lack of adequate public services, criminal involvement, and other problems (Martinez 2005; Waldinger 2001). For example, Martinez, Lee, and Nielsen (2004) found that immigrants in an impoverished Mexican neighborhood of San Diego were more likely to be involved in drug-related violence. Moreover, strain resulting from participation in the secondary labor market is one of the types of strains more likely to lead to criminal involvement (Agnew 2001).

As with many other individuals in the United States, immigrants and their children also have aspirations and desires for socioeconomic advancement. Adult immigrants attempt to achieve social mobility through employment, and child immigrants try to attain it through education. Moreover, many first generation immigrants would sacrifice further education for themselves in lieu of working long hours for supplementary income to invest in their children's education (Portes and Rumbaut 2006). Immigrant children's educational attainment is usually used as a measure of their level of adaptation. However, while participating in the educational system as immigrants (either those who were born here or those who immigrated when they were young), many issues that they face bring strain to their lives. Immigrants with limited skill sets tend to settle in metropolitan urban areas where the tax base is lacking and therefore the educational

system is failing (Wilson 1987). The poor educational system perpetuates the unequal access to the legitimate opportunity structure, which limits the ability to attain aspirations and goals and thus leads to crime-inducing strain. In addition, although studies show that some second generation immigrants, including the one and a half generation immigrants,[3] are able to surpass their parents, there are many who do not find chances in the opportunity structure and end up in worse economic situations than those of their parents (Zhou 2001).

Another factor hindering immigrants' social mobility is their lack of English fluency, which impedes not only job mobility but also access to educational avenues to learn new skills. Language is one of the categories used to mark an individual as belonging to the "out-group" (Aranda 2007). The feelings of being an outsider can lead to isolation and alienation and thus cause anger (Zhou 1997). Being able to speak English without an accent seems to be important for some immigrants in order for them to be able to "pass" as White (the in-group) since "nonstandard" English is related to non-Whiteness. These same feelings are not unique to adult immigrants; they also occur among immigrant children. Immigrant children are sometimes punished in school when they speak their native language, and so they often find themselves not belonging either to their country of origin or to the new country (Portes and Rumbaut 2001; Zhou 1997). As shown by Portes and Rumbaut, bilingual immigrants tend to earn better grades in school than those with English as their only language, yet schools encourage monolingual interactions among students with English being the preferred language. The stressors of language among younger immigrants may be alleviated by the rapid pace through which

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[3] In this study, second generation immigrants are those who were born in the United States of immigrant parents. The term "one-and-half generation immigrants" is used to refer to those who immigrated to the United States as young children (Zhou 1997).

immigrant children adopt the English language (Portes and Rumbaut 2001). However, knowing the language does not necessarily decrease the negative feelings that surface when they realize that educational achievement and upward mobility are likely not possible.

American youngsters in the bottom of the hourglass feel oppressed and excluded, which may lead them to dislike social systems such as schools and to rebel against authority figures. Immigrant children with limited skills-sets usually come into this context and adopt the "oppositional culture" (Zhou 1997:69). This social context is worsened by the economic restructuring in the United States that has occurred over the past several decades in which many urban schools are not well-funded and thus children's educational attainment is not favorable, widening the gap between aspirations and outcomes (Perlmann and Waldinger 1997).

The rebellion engaged in by many of these youngsters is a means of coping with the impeded upward mobility and the feelings of resentment and anger (Agnew 1992, 2001). In addition to the strain immigrant children face at school, they may also have to confront conflicts in their family. It has been observed that the immigration process and adjustment to a new society's culture can exacerbate conflicts between parents and children (Aronowitz 1984) and that these conflicts are more predominant in immigrant families than in non-immigrant families (Zhou 1997). The conflicts between immigrant parents and their children place the children at greater risk of being involved in crime because there is decreased social control (Aronowitz 1984; Zhou 1997).

Although immigrants' strains are not specifically discussed in the general strain theory or in the research testing the theory's efficacy, the adversities and stressful

conditions that immigrants face in the United States are consistent with the theory. As discussed in general strain theory (Agnew 1992, 2001), immigrants' strains resulting from economic difficulties and language barriers can bring about feelings of anger among immigrants and immigrant children. The strains and resulting anger may engender greater criminal and delinquent activity. Yet, regardless of the strains they experience, immigrants do not have higher rates of involvement in crime when compared to the native-born population (Lee et al. 2001; Lynch and Simon 2002; Martinez 2002; Martinez and Lee 2000; Martinez and Valenzuela 2006; Rumbaut and Ewing 2007). This paradox might be in part due to factors that decrease the likelihood of involvement in crime among immigrants such as transnationalism.

Concept of Transnationalism

Most immigrants, especially the first generation, tend to engage in patterns of living involving two different nations: the host nation and the nation of origin. They are involved and have been involved in exchanges that cross national borders. These exchanges are termed "transnationalism." Transnationalism is generally defined as the practices through which immigrants form and maintain social networks crossing geographic, cultural, and political borders linking immigrants with their country of origin and the host country (Basch, Glick-Schiller, and Szanton-Blanc 1994; Portes, Guarnizo, and Landolt 1999). Although they have always been present, transnational activities in recent decades have increased in quantity with the aid of technological advances. For example, advances in areas of mass transportation provide immigrants with the ability to travel back and forth with speedy air travel encouraging relational ties in both countries. Also, with the development of cellular phones and the Internet easy communication can

be maintained with family and friends in distant countries (Portes et al. 1999). The creation of the World Wide Web provides immigrants not only email capability but also the opportunity to read news online about their home countries from sources not readily found in their host society or community, such as hard copies of national and international newspapers. Through these various activities and behaviors, immigrants are able to maintain ties and social relations with their country of origin, with their family, and with the friends who stayed behind. These ties may be developed at an individual level or at the community level including, but not limited to, family, organizations and political ties.

Immigrants are usually considered to be transnational when they travel back and forth from the U.S. to their country of origin and vice versa, and when immigrants send remittances back to their countries. However, transnational activities are not only limited to these most visible and tangible activities but also include those that immigrants can practice to maintain ties with their country of origin and which do not require substantial monetary funds, such as communication through emails and phone calls (Aranda, Sabogal, and Hughes, forthcoming). Regardless of the type, transnational behaviors are normative and common forms of living for immigrants (Levitt and Glick-Schiller 2004; Portes 1999)

Immigrants often involve themselves in transnational processes and activities as a response to their social immobility in the host country (Portes 1999). Moreover, immigrants' transnational activities could result from the processes of integration and adaptation into the new host society. Involvement in transnational activities could assist immigrants in easing their adaptation processes to the new country and culture (Faist

2000a; Kivisto 2001; Portes et al. 1999). This could include adaptation to the types of strains consistent with the general strain theory which can lead to criminal involvement (Agnew 1992, 2001).

The Effects of Transnational Ties

In the criminology and immigration literatures, it is uncommon to examine immigrants' individual social processes such as involvement in transnational behaviors and their effects on criminal activity, respectively. Criminologists have neglected immigrants in general but transnationalism specifically, while immigration scholars largely overlook crime. Yet, these transnational processes are important to consider with regard to crime because they are phenomena specific to immigrant groups (Kivisto 2001; Levitt and Glick-Schiller 2004; Portes 1999). Thus, it is potentially beneficial to examine the role these behaviors and ties may play for criminal involvement.

Recent studies indicated that immigrants in general were less likely to be involved in crime and that their crime and incarceration rates were even often disproportionately lower than those of the native-born population (Hagan and Palloni 1999; Martinez and Valenzuela 2006; Rumbaut and Ewing 2007). Sociologists and criminologists alike have not yet assessed in detail the reasons behind immigrants' lower rates of incarceration and involvement in crime. One of the macro-level hypotheses is that immigrants contribute to the strengthening of the communities into which they move, thus leading to less crime (Martinez 2005). However, another reason could be that immigrants' lower level of criminal involvement is due to micro-level factors such as their transnational activities.

These types of activities are specific to immigrants and may be insulating them from crime involvement by providing conventional social support to alleviate their

strains. This is because transnational ties may mediate the effects of strain from the immigration adaptation process, thus protecting them from criminal involvement. Moreover, acting as social support, they increase immigrants' chances of using positive coping mechanisms and reducing negative feelings, such as anger and resentment, which can lead to criminal activity (Agnew 1992, 2001). These possible effects of transnational ties on crime may differ by generation since studies in the immigration literature have found that transnational practices are most prevalent among first-generation immigrants and that the ties with the country of origin tend to subside with each subsequent generation (Portes 1999; Smith 2006). This may offer some insight into the higher rate of criminal involvement among the second generation and long-term immigrants when compared to first generation and newly arrived immigrants (Rumbaut and Ewing 2007).

In a recent study, Rumbaut and Ewing (2007) found that the longer immigrants are in the United States, the higher the risk of being incarcerated. For instance, for every "pan-ethnic" group they analyzed (using the 2000 census data), they found that those who had been in the United States for more than 16 years had higher incarceration rates than those who had been in the United States for 5 years or less. The authors attributed this to the assimilation process, and they referred to it as the "assimilation paradox." They argued that assimilation is usually discussed as the acquisition of all the positive aspects of the receiving society. However, Rumbaut and Ewing stated that assimilation could also mean the acquisition of negative aspects of the receiving country such as worse health status and involvement in crime. Rumbaut and Ewing cited a study by Harris, Bui, and Thingniramol (1999) that demonstrated that second-generation immigrant youth were likely to become alcohol abusers. These findings were consistent with Gans and

Sandberg's (1973) "straight-line assimilation" theory, which stated that assimilation occurs through subsequent generations. Conversely, Morenoff and Astor (2006) argued that when comparing generations, it is important to consider the immigrants' age of entry because it could indicate that involvement in crime is due to social factors related to age and not to assimilation into American culture. The authors conducted a more rigorous study and found that among first-generation immigrants those who immigrated during adolescence have significantly higher involvement in crime than those who immigrated at a later age. However, crime rates for both groups do not surpass those of the native-born population.

Additionally, Agnew (2001) argued that working in the secondary labor market is a strain that is more likely to lead to criminality because such employment results in low commitment and thus low social control. However, this may not be the case among immigrants, especially those who practice transnational activities. Contrary to this argument, immigrants may be highly committed even to poor jobs because they need the money to sustain themselves as well as to send remittances back to their families. Kivisto (2001) observed that those who send remittances were emotionally attached and sought to maintain their bond to their families. Given that immigrants tend to be involved in transnational behaviors, immigrants might therefore have other sources of social support besides the conventional ones found among native-born Americans. Transnational ties may provide immigrants with a protective factor that is not often found among the native-born. Potentially, this helps to account for the immigration and crime paradox.

Evidence showing that immigrants are not highly criminogenic still does not temper the diffusion of the "criminal immigrant" stereotype. Contemporary perceptions

of immigrants result from the perceived threat that they pose to the self-appointed dominant group (Blumer 1958). These perceptions may lead to opposition of immigrants and support for measures that exclude immigrants. Moreover, misperceptions about these groups create a discriminatory social context which immigrants encounter once they immigrate to the United States; discrimination is a type of strain that can lead to crime.

This context provides additional adversities that immigrants have to overcome during their process of adjustment. The adversities and strains that immigrants face may be crime inducing. However, immigrants also practice transnational behaviors which may potentially be insulating them from criminal involvement.

Based on Agnew's general strain theory and the reviewed literature, the following hypotheses were tested:

Hypothesis 7: Short-term immigrants have lower levels of crime involvement than the native-born.

Hypothesis 8: Long-term immigrants have lower levels of crime involvement than native-born Americans.

Hypothesis 9: Immigrants' strains and non-immigrants' strain are related to crime involvement.

Hypothesis 10: Conditioning factors (self-esteem, income satisfaction, money importance, and religiosity) mediate the effects of strains on crime among short-term immigrants, long-term immigrants, and native-born Americans.

Hypothesis 11: Transnational ties, as a source of conventional social support for immigrants, mediate the effect of strains on crime among immigrants even while holding constant other conditioning factors.

The following chapter presents information about the data. The analytical procedures conducted to test the hypotheses of this study are presented in the following chapter as well.

CHAPTER 3

DATA AND METHODOLOGY

Information on the two data sets used in this study is presented in this chapter. The various analytical procedures conducted to test the hypotheses are described. Also, this chapter provides an explanation of the models estimated in this study.

This study had two key goals. The first goal was to examine perceptions of immigrant groups and their effects on immigration policy views (Blumer 1958). The second goal was to examine criminal activity among immigrants and the effects of transnational ties as social support, on the relationship between immigrants' strains and crime based on the premises of Agnew's (1992, 2001) general strain theory.

DATA

Two data sets were used to test the hypotheses presented in this study. One data set was used to test the hypotheses related to perceived threat and immigration policy views. A second data set was used to test the hypotheses related to immigrants' strains, transnational ties, and crime.

In order to examine the relationships between perceived threat and immigration policy views, this study used the 2004 General Social Survey (GSS). The GSS is a cross-sectional, nationally representative household survey, which utilized a probability sample of U.S. English speaking adults age 18 and older. The results are generalizable to all non-institutionalized U.S. adults living in households. In 2004, the GSS questionnaire included a split ballot from the International Social Survey Programme (ISSP) Module on Citizenship. The ISSP module in the 2004 GSS asked questions regarding National Identity and Citizenship. Since the split ballot included items concerning immigrants and

immigration, it provided measures to assess several tenets of Blumer's (1958) group threat theory and its efficacy using immigrant groups as the studied population.

The response rate for the 2004 GSS survey was approximately 71 percent. The initial sample size was $N = 2,812$. The total number of respondents who completed the split ballot, International Social Survey Programme (ISSP) Module on Citizenship, was $N = 1,142$. The GSS randomly selected the respondents to answer the ISSP module included in the 2004 survey. As with most data sets, the 2004 GSS had respondents who did not answer or did not know the answer to one or more questions. With this in mind, respondents with missing information on any of the variables used for this study were excluded from the analyses. The respondents who were not asked the 2004 GSS split ballot ISSP Module on Citizenship were excluded as well. Listwise deletion was used to exclude respondents with missing data on any of the variables and those who did not complete the split ballot. Although listwise deletion reduces the total sample size leading to less precise estimators, this method is the simplest when dealing with missing data (Allison 1998). Moreover, it eliminates biased estimates in samples selected randomly (Wooldridge 2006). The study final sample was $N = 1,028$ (90% of those who were administered the ISSP module).

In order to determine if any of the relevant demographic variables are significantly related to the missing observations, logistic regression analyses were conducted to predict the likelihood of missing data. A variable with the missing observations was created such that the missing observations were coded with the value of 1 and the non-missing observations were coded with the value 0. Using logistic regression, the new "missing" variable was regressed on immigration status, race, gender,

class and political identification (demographic variables with least missing observations). In particular, political Independents were found to be more likely than Republicans to be related to the missing observations ($p<.05$). No other independent variables were associated with missing data. Overall, the results from the subsequent analyses may be somewhat biased for political Independents relative to Republicans because their greater likelihood of missing data and thus exclusion from the analyses involving the 2004 GSS data and perceptions of immigrants as threats.

Unfortunately, the 2004 GSS did not contain information on immigrants' involvement in transnational activities. Therefore, in order to examine the relationships between strain, transnational ties, and crime, this study used data from the Children of Immigrants Longitudinal Survey (CILS) (Portes and Rumbaut 2003). The CILS is a longitudinal study that was developed over a period of 10 years with a total of three surveys. These surveys were directed by Alejandro Portes and Ruben G. Rumbaut. The study was designed to explore the social dynamics of adaptation and integration of children of immigrants (e.g., the second generation). Due to the initial objective of the CILS, the principal investigators had specific eligibility criteria for respondents. The first criterion was that the sample had to have an average age of 14 years to reflect the mean age of immigrant children as reported by the U.S. Census Bureau. The other criterion was that respondents had to have one foreign-born parent. The latter was required in order to meet the directors' definition of second generation immigrants. Portes and Rumbaut's study defined second-generation immigrant children as those who were born in the United States and who had at least one foreign-born parent, or those who were born in another country and who immigrated at a young age (specifically before adolescence).

The latter group has also been referred to as the one-and-a-half generation (Zhou 1999). The samples were drawn from a total of 49 schools found in Miami/Ft. Lauderdale, Florida and San Diego, California. The directors of CILS purposely chose these areas due to their growing populations of new immigrants.

The baseline survey was conducted in 1992, at which time the sample had an average age of 14. The total number of respondents at baseline was 5,262 and they were almost equally distributed between the Miami/Ft. Lauderdale area and San Diego. The first follow-up was conducted three years later in 1995-1996, around the time when the children were of high school graduation age. The sample size at wave 2 was 4,288, reflecting an 81.5 percent retention rate. Almost five years later, between 2001 and 2003, the second follow-up (wave 3) was conducted when the original sample had reached adulthood. The third wave retained 64 percent of the original sample ($N = 3,344$). For the current study, data were drawn from the first follow-up (wave 2) and the second follow-up (wave 3). The dependent variable was drawn from the third wave and the remaining variables were drawn from wave 2 and wave 3.

Self-report surveys are one of the three most common means to measure crime and delinquency. As with any other method of measuring crime and delinquency, self-reports might have difficulty capturing what is intended with the measures (validity) and with whether measures obtain the same results over repeated testings (reliability). However, self-reports are generally considered to provide reliable and valid data (Huizinga and Elliot 1987; Portes and Rumbaut 2001a, 2001b, 2005, 2006).

Longitudinal studies (or panel studies) are considered to be the most appropriate design when studying changes over time. Nonetheless, there are some threats to validity

inherent in longitudinal studies. In particular, there are two key threats to validity in longitudinal studies. The first is maturation or mortality, which refers to any loss of respondents due to the inability to contact respondents for follow-ups or the respondents' unwillingness (or inability) to continue participating in the study either because of refusal or because of death. A second threat to validity is reinterviewing bias, which refers to when respondents' answers are affected by repeated questioning about the same issues (Miller and Salkind 2002). Since the CILS is a longitudinal study, it is possible that it was affected by these two threats.

As with the GSS data set, the CILS have respondents who did not answer or did not know the answer to one or more questions. Therefore, listwise deletion was also used to exclude from the analyses respondents with missing data and their responses on any of the variables. With the attrition threat inherent in CILS and the exclusion of respondents with missing data from the waves 2 and 3, the final sample for this study was $N = 1,649$ (39% of wave 2, and 49% of wave 3). The sample size excluding the native-born population was $N = 861$.

In order to determine if any of the pertinent variables was related to the likelihood of missing data, a new variable was created. For the new variable, "missing," all the missing observations were coded with the value of 1 and all the non-missing observations were coded with the value of 0. Logistic regression was conducted in which "missing" was regressed on immigration status, race, gender, English proficiency, family cohesiveness, self-esteem, money importance, and religiosity (the variables with the least missing observations). There were two response categories that were related to the missing data. In particular, Asians were more likely than Whites to have missing data

($p<.001$) and males were more likely than females to have missing data ($p<.05$). None of the other independent variables were related to missing data. Overall, the results are likely to be less valid for males relative to females and for Asians relative to Whites, given these groups' likelihood of missing data and thus exclusion from the main analyses involving CILS data and immigrant crime.

VARIABLES

This study used one set of variables derived from the GSS 2004 data and the second set was from the CILS data. The following section provides an explanation of the variables and a description of how these were coded, with the perceptions of immigrants items discussed first followed by the immigrant crime involvement measures.

The GSS 2004 contained several questions that provided measures to examine the various tenets of Blumer's group threat theory (1958). These items included measures such as views of immigrants' and the crime rate, economy, political power, and nativism. Moreover, demographic measures were included in this study to control for their possible influence on immigration policy views.

Dependent variables. This study utilized two dependent variables, opposition to increasing the number of immigrants and support for stronger measures to exclude undocumented immigrants. The first dependent variable, opposition to increasing the number of immigrants, was operationalized by levels of agreement to the statement, "Do you think the number of immigrants to America nowadays should be…" The original response categories were "Increased a lot," "Increased a little," "Remain the same," "Decreased a little," "Decreased a lot," "Cannot choose," and "No answer." The original scale of 1 to 5 was kept, in which a high score (maximum=5) indicated greater opposition

and a low score (minimum=1) indicated low opposition to increasing the number of immigrants. Respondents with "Cannot choose" and "No answer" responses were excluded from the analyses.

The second dependent variable, support for stronger measures to exclude undocumented immigrants, was operationalized by the levels of agreement to the statement, "Do you agree or disagree with this statement: America should take stronger measures to exclude illegal immigrants." The original response categories were "Strongly agree," "Agree," "Neither," "Disagree," "Strongly disagree," "Cannot choose," and "No answer." The original order of the scales was reversed and thus a high score (maximum=5) indicated higher support and a low score (minimum=1) indicated lower support for stronger measured to exclude undocumented immigrants. Respondents with "Cannot choose" and "No answer" responses were excluded from the analyses.

Independent variables. Perceived immigrant threat is the main independent variable of interest. This main variable was constructed from four key items, which were operationalized as perceived immigrant threats to the crime rate, economy, political power, and nativism. Perceived immigrant threat to the crime rate was operationalized by levels of agreement with the statement, "Do you agree or disagree with this statement: Immigrants increase crime rates." Perceived immigrant threat to the economy was operationalized by levels of agreement with the statement, "Immigrants are generally good for America's economy." Perceived immigrant threat to political power was operationalized by levels of agreement with the statement, "Legal immigrants to America who are not citizens should have the same rights as American citizens." Perceived immigrant threat to national identity was operationalized by levels of agreement with the

statement, "Immigrants improve American society by bringing in new ideas and cultures." For all four variables, the original response categories were "1=Agree Strongly," "2=Agree," "3=Neither agree nor disagree," "4=Disagree," "5=Disagree strongly," "Cannot choose," and "No answer." Respondents with "Cannot choose" and "No answer" responses to any of the four items were excluded from the analyses. The response categories for the variable operationalizing perceived immigrant threat to the crime rate was reverse coded in order for it to match the low-to-high threat scale of the other key items.

Composite 'Perceived Threat' Index (as independent variable). Based on factor analysis results, a composite 'perceived immigrant threat' index was created by adding the scores of the items and then dividing the scores by four (the number of items). A high score (maximum = 5) indicated higher perceived threat and low score (minimum = 1) indicated lower perceived threat.

Control variables. This study held constant a total of five respondents' characteristics. These included gender, race, immigrant status, education, social class, and political identification. Respondents who provided no answer or choice "Don't Know" to any of the items were excluded from the analyses.

For gender, the category "Male" was coded with the value of 1 and the category "Female" was coded with the value of 0. Race/ethnicity was respondent's race or ethnicity and was measured by responses to the question, "What is your race?" The original responses comprised of ten different race and ethnic categories. Response categories were collapsed and recoded into "White," Black and "Other." Dummy variables were created for all the categories and the respondents were coded with a value

of 1 if they belonged to the specific group and a value of 0 if they did not. "White" was the reference category in the analyses.

Immigration status was operationalized by the responses to the question, "Were you born in this country?" The original response categories were "Yes" and "No." "Yes" was recoded as "Non-immigrant" and coded as 0 and "No" was recoded as "Immigrant" and coded as 1.

Education was respondent's self-reported highest degree completed. The original response categories were "Less than high school," "High school," "Associate/Junior college," "Bachelor's," and "Graduate." Dummy variables were created for all the education categories and the respondents were coded with a value of 1 if they indicated having each specific education degree and a value of 0 if they did not. "Graduate" level of education was the reference category in the analyses.

Social class was measured by responses to the question, "If you were asked to use one of four names for your social class, which would you say you belong in: the lower class, the working class, the middle class, or the upper class?" The response categories were "Lower," "Working," "Middle," and "Upper." Dummy variables were created for all the response categories and the respondents were coded with a value of 1 if they were a member of each specific social class and a value of 0 if they were not. "Upper" was the reference category in the analyses.

Political identification was measured by the responses to the question, "Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as a Republican, Democrat, Independent, or what?" The original response categories were "Strong Democrat," "Not very strong Democrat," "Independent, close to Democrat," "Independent," "Independent, close to

Republican," "Not very strong Republican," and "Strong Republican." The response categories were collapsed into "*Republican*," which included respondents with the responses "Not very strong Republican" and "Strong Republican;" "*Democrat*," which included respondents with the responses "Not very strong Democrat" and "Strong Democrat;" and "*Independent*," which included respondents with the responses "Independent, close to Democrat," "Independent," and "Independent, close to Republican." Dummy variables were created for the categories and the respondents were coded with a value of 1 if they were a member of each specific political party and a value of 0 if they were not. "Republican" was the reference category in the analyses.

The aforementioned variables were used in the various statistical methods to examine perceptions of immigrants and immigration policy views. Unfortunately, the GSS 2004 did not provide information to measure the association between immigrants' strains, crime, and transnational activities. Because of this, a different data set had to be used and therefore measurements from CILS were drawn to examine the latter association. The CILS asked each respondent several questions that provide measures to assess the different tenets of the general strain theory of crime (Agnew 1992, 2001) such as arrest history, respondents' English proficiency, employment, discrimination, occupation, self-esteem, and social support. Additionally, demographic variables were included in the current study to determine the existence of direct relationships between strains and arrest history. Respondents who did not answer one or more of the items here were excluded from the analyses.

Dependent variable. Arrest, the dependent variable, was operationalized by responses to the question, "During the past five years, have any of the following life

change events happened to you or your family? I was arrested." The original response categories were "Yes" and "No." "Yes" was coded with the value of 1 and "No" was coded with the value of 0. The data set did not contain specification about the types of crime.

Independent variables. According to Agnew (2001) there are some strains that are more likely to lead to criminality. This study measured four types of strains with three of the strains being particularly relevant to immigrant groups. The strains related to immigrants are: (1) English proficiency, (2) occupation in secondary labor market, and (3) experience of discrimination due to ascribed characteristics.

English proficiency was a composite scale created by the authors of the CILS using four items. A high score (maximum=4) indicated greater English proficiency and a low score (minimum=1) indicated low English proficiency with reliability at $\alpha \geq 0.90$ as reported by Portes and Hao (2002).

Occupation in the secondary labor market was operationalized by the responses to the question, "Currently, what is your main occupation or job - that is, the paid job you spend the most time at now?" The responses to the question were written verbatim. The responses are collapsed into the categories *"Primary labor market*," which included respondents who held jobs in the primary labor market; "*Secondary labor market*," which included those who held jobs in the secondary labor market; "*Other*," which included respondents who reported being in the military and who were self-employed; and "*Have no job*," which included those with the responses "No occupation," "Welfare," "Disabled," "Student," and "Homemaker." Dummy variables were created for each of the response categories and the respondents were coded with the value of 1 when they

belonged to the specific occupation category and with the value of 0 when they did not. "Primary labor market" was used as the reference category.

According to Agnew (2001), experiencing discrimination, especially when it is due to ascribed characteristics, is more likely to lead to criminality as a response to strain. The third and last variable measuring strain especially relevant to immigrant groups is discrimination due ascribed characteristics, which was operationalized by the responses to the question, "Have you ever felt discriminated against because of your race and/or ethnicity?" The response categories were "Yes" and "No." The response "Yes" was coded with the value of 1 and "No" was coded with the value of 0.

The remaining measure of strain (not relevant to only immigrants) was related to low levels of social control operationalized by family cohesiveness. Family cohesiveness was a scale constructed by the authors of CILS as a unit-weighted index of three questions in the survey: (1) family members spend their free time with each other, (2) family members feel close to each other, and (3) family togetherness is very important. The response categories to these items were "Never," "Once in a while," "Sometimes," "Often," and "Always." A high score (maximum=5) indicated high control and a low score (minimum=1) indicated low control with reliability at $\alpha = 0.85$ as reported by Portes and Rumbaut (2001).

Conditioning variables. Agnew (1992, 2001) argued that there are some conditioning factors that can influence the subjectivity of strains and individuals' choices to resort to crime when facing stressful situations. The conditioning factors included in the analyses were: self-esteem, importance of having money, and social support (operationalized by religiosity and transnational ties).

CILS used Rosenberg's Self-Esteem scale to assess self-esteem. One of the items of the scale was "I am a person of equal worth to others" and the response categories were "Agree a lot," "Agree a little," "Disagree a little," and "Disagree a lot." A high score (maximum=4) indicated high self-esteem and a low score (minimum=1) indicated low self-esteem with reliability at $\alpha = 0.81$ as reported by Portes and Rumbaut (2001). (All items used in this scale are listed Appendix A).

Importance of having money was operationalized by the responses to the question, "How important is each of the following to you in your life? Having lots of money." The original response categories were "Not important," "Somewhat important," and "Very Important." The variable was coded as a continuous variable. A low score (minimum=1) indicated less importance and high score (maximum=3) indicated high importance.

Religiosity was the first variable used to measure conventional social support. It was operationalized by the responses to the question, "About how often do you attend religious services?" The response categories were "Never," "Less than once a year," "About once or twice a year," "Several times a year," "About once or twice a month," "Nearly every week," "Every week," and "Several times a week." The variable was coded as a continuous variable ranging from 1-7.

This study used three variables that quantified transnational activities to assess transnational ties and immigrants' unique social supports. These items were trips back home, remittances in the form of money, and living in the home country for more than six months. The variable "trips back to the home country" was operationalized by responses to the question, "How many times have you been back to visit your or your parents'

home country?" Respondents provided the actual number of trips that they have made. The list ranged from 0 to 300. The responses were collapsed and the variable was coded as a continuous variable ranging from 0-9.

Remittance was operationalized by responses to the question, "How often do you send money there?" The response categories were "Never," "Less than once a year," "About once or twice a year," "Several times a year," "About once or twice a month," and "About once a week." The variable was coded as a continuous variable ranging from 1-6.

Living in the home country for more than six months was operationalized by the responses to the question, "Have you gone back and lived there longer than six months?" The response categories were "Yes" and "No." "Yes" was coded with the value of 1 and "No" was coded with the value of 0.

Control variables. There were a total of five control variables in the second part of this study: gender, race/ethnicity, immigration status, education, and income. For gender, the category "Male" was coded with the value of 1 and the category "Female" was coded with the value of 0.

Race/ethnicity was measured with responses to the question, "How do you identify, that is what do you call yourself?" The original list of responses totaled about 50 different categories. Thus, the categories were collapsed and recoded into "White," "Black," "Latino," "Asian," and "Other." Dummy variables were created for all the race/ethnicity categories and the respondents were coded with a value of 1 if they were a member of each specific group and a value of 0 if they were not. "White" was the reference category in the analyses. For the second set of binomial logistic regression

models, "White" was collapsed into "Other." Dummy variables were created for "Black," "Latino," and "Asian" and the respondents were coded with a value of 1 if they were a member of each specific group and a value of 0 if they were not. "Black" was the reference category in the analyses.

Immigration status was operationalized by responses to the question, "How long have you lived in the United States?" The original response categories were "All my life," "Ten years or more," "Five to nine years," and "Less than five years." The response categories were collapsed into "*Native-born*," which included respondents with the responses "All my life;" "*Long-term immigrants*," which included respondents with the response "Ten years or more;" and "*Short-term immigrants*," which included respondent with the response "Five to nine years" and "Less than five years." Dummy variables were created for the response categories and respondents were coded with the value of 1 if they belonged to the status and with the value of 0 if they did not. "Native-born American" was the reference category in the analyses. For the second series of binomial logistic regression models, *"Native-born American"* was excluded from the analyses and *"Short-term immigrants"* was coded as 0 and *"Long-term Immigrants"* was coded as 1.

Income was the respondents' family's yearly salary. The response categories ranged from "less than 5,000" to "200,000 or more." The variable was coded as a continuous variable ranging from 1-12.

METHODOLOGY

Several analytical procedures were conducted in this study. The composite 'perceived immigrant threat' index was created by adding and averaging the scores of the four items. Four key items were available (perceived immigrant threats to the crime rate,

economy, political power, and nativism). The first step was to recode the first key independent variable in order to match the low-to-high threat scale of the other three independent variables. Factor analysis was performed by extracting the factor scores from the four key independent variables by employing the principal components method. This technique was appropriate to apply in this study because it was used to detect the factor structure of the four key independent variables in order to construct the composite 'perceived immigrant threat' index. Stata test runs yielded only one principal component with eigenvalue higher than one (eigenvalue = 2.08) with factor loadings of 0.54 and higher, which resulted in the retention of such (Hair, Anderson, Tatham, and Black 1998). Based on the factor analysis results the composite 'perceived immigrant threat' index was calculated by summing up the scores and dividing the score by the number of items (4). The alpha level for this index was 69%.

Univariate, bivariate, and multivariate analyses were conducted in this study. To establish frequencies of occurrence this study calculated various descriptive statistics such as percentages and means using basic univariate analyses of the pertinent variables. Between group differences were analyzed using two sample t-tests and one-way ANOVAs for continuous variables, and chi-square tests were used for categorical variables.

Partial associations were examined by analyzing multivariate relationships. Two different regression methods were used in this dissertation. First, a series of ordered logistic regression models were estimated to determine and to test the study's proposed hypotheses concerning perceptions of threats and their relation to immigration policy views. Ordered logistic regression (OLR) is the type of regression analysis used when the

dependent variable contains more than two ordered categories. Second, a series of (binomial) logistic regression models were estimated to test the study's proposed hypotheses concerning immigration, crime, and transnational activities. The latter type of regression analysis is most commonly used when the dependent variable is dichotomized and assumes the values of 1 for when the condition exists and 0 for when it does not.

The two methods of regression are based on transforming data by taking their natural logarithms so as to reduce nonlinearity, which means that this method uses the logistic curve that best approximates the data. Logistic regressions estimate parameters using maximum likelihood estimation (MLE). MLE maximizes the log likelihood, which reflects how likely it is (the odds) that the observed values of the dependent variable may be due to the observed values of the independent variables. These types of regression analyses assume that responses by different cases are independent of each other. However, unlike OLS regression they do not assume a linear relationship between the dependent variable and the other variables included in the models; they do not assume that the dependent variable is normally distributed; and, they do not assume the error terms are normally distributed (homoskedesticity).

The coefficient estimates resulting from ORL and logistic regressions are interpreted as changes in the log of the odds (Pagano and Gauvreau, 2000; Wooldridge, 2006). The OLR analysis estimates multiple equations at the same time. The total number of equations it estimates is the number of categories in the dependent variable minus one. Thus, for this dissertation there were four equations estimated for each of the dependent variables measuring immigration beliefs. The equations were:

	Pooled Categories	compared to	Pooled Categories
Equation 1:	1		2345
Equation 2:	12		345
Equation 3:	123		45
Equation 4:	1234		5

Each equation provides the odds of being in a set of categories on the left versus the set of categories on the right. This study interpreted OLR results using the ordered log-odds regression coefficients and the odds ratios. The results of the analyses were interpreted as likelihoods using odds ratios. This was done by observing how much the odds deviate from 1. The odds ratio is exponentiated beta value (coefficient) e^b and is obtained through the following formula:

$$e^b = e^a e^{bx} e^b / e^a e^{bx}$$

Where *a* is the constant, *b* is the coefficient estimate, and *bx* is the coefficient estimate value on the independent variable. In addition to running a series of logistic regression models, the level of multicollinearity was assessed by examining the variance inflation factors (VIF).

Models

The regression analyses for this study were estimated using a set of models which contained a different group of variables. The independent, control, and mediating variables were analyzed in a block entry form in order to examine the significance level and to enable the observation of any changes in the effects of the independent variables on the dependent variable as additional measures were included. This method also

allowed determination of whether statistical significance of the independent variable persisted after introducing the control variables and the mediating variables.

Figure 3.1 shows the series of ordered logistic regression models estimated to test the relationship between perceived threat and opposition to immigrants and support for stronger measures to exclude undocumented immigrants. In the first model, for each of dependent variables, the outcomes were regressed on perceived threats. This enabled examination of hypothesis 1 concerning relationships between perceived threat and opposing immigrants and of hypothesis 4 concerning relationships between perceived threat and support for stronger measure to exclude undocumented immigrants. In Model 2, race/ethnicity was included in the ordered logistic analysis. Including the race/ethnicity measure enabled the assessment of hypotheses 2 and 5 in that relationship between race/ethnicity and opposing immigration can be determined. For the third model, immigration status was included in the ordered logistic analysis. This enabled examination of hypothesis 3 concerning the relationship between immigration status and opposing immigrants and of hypothesis 6 concerning immigration status and support for stronger measures to exclude undocumented immigrants. In Model 4, the remaining control measures (gender, education, social class, and political identification) were included in the ordered logistic analysis. This modeling strategy allowed assessment of the relationships between pertinent variables and opposing immigration before and after controlling for other predictors measures.

Figure 3.1 Ordered Logistic Regression Models Estimated for Both Dependent Variables (Opposition to Immigrants and Support for Stronger Measures to Exclude Undocumented Immigrants)

Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Perceived threat	Perceived threat	Perceived threat	Perceived threat
	Race/Ethnicity	Race/Ethnicity	Race/Ethnicity
		Immigration Status	Immigration Status
			All remaining control variables

Figure 3.2 shows the series of binomial logistic regression models estimated to test the relationship between immigrants' strains and crime, and the mediating effects of conditioning factors and transnational ties using both the general data and the immigrant only data set. For the first model, arrest was regressed on immigration status. This enabled examination of immigration status and crime involvement relationship (hypothesis 7 and 8). In Model 2, arrest was regressed on the control variables of gender, race, and income. For the third model, immigration status was included. In Model 4, all the strains (English proficiency, occupation in the secondary labor market, discrimination, and family cohesiveness), were included. The inclusion of strains enabled the assessment of hypothesis 9 concerning the relationship between immigrants' and non-immigrants' strains and crime involvement. In Model 5, the conditioning variables (self-esteem, money importance, and religiosity) were included in the logistic regression analysis. This enabled examination of whether the conditioning factors mediate the effects of strains on crime involvement (hypothesis 10). Transnational ties as measured by trips back home, remittance, and living the country of origin, were included in Model 6. Including transnational ties enabled assessment of hypothesis 11 concerning the

mediating effects of transnational ties on the strain-crime involvement relationship. The modeling approach adopted in this study specifically enabled examination of the relationships between pertinent measures and crime involvement before and after controlling for demographic and conditioning measures.

Figure 3.2 Logistic Regression Models Estimated for Arrest

Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6
Immigration Status	---	Immigration Status	Immigration Status	Immigration Status	Immigration Status
	Control Variables	Control Variables	Control Variables	Control Variables	Control Variables
			Immigrants' Strains and other Strain	Immigrants' Strains and other Strain	Immigrants' Strains and other Strain
				Conditioning Factors	Conditioning Factors
					Immigrants' Conditioning Factors

In the following Chapter 4 – Results for Contemporary Perceptions of Immigrants as Threats, the results of the analyses examining the relationship between perceived threats and opposition to immigrants and support for stronger measures to exclude undocumented immigrants are presented.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS FOR PERCEPTIONS OF IMMIGRANT GROUPS
AS THREATS AND IMMIGRATION POLICY VIEWS

The following section provides the results of analyses concerning the effects of perceived immigrant threat on immigration policy views. The first section of the chapter contains information on the perceived threat index. The univariate results for all variables considered in the analyses are presented in the second section. The third section contains the bivariate results for the independent variable of perceived threat and each of the dependent variables. The results of the multivariate analyses are found in the fourth section of this chapter.

PERCEIVED IMMIGRANT THREAT INDEX

Table 4.1 shows the results of the factor analysis conducted to determine whether the four individual threat items represented a common construct. The factor loadings for perceived immigrant threat to the crime rate was 0.73, for perceived immigrant threat to the economy was 0.82, for perceived immigrant threat to political power was 0.54, and for perceived immigrant threat to nativism was 0.80. The eigenvalue for this factor was 2.14 with 53% variance and cumulative variance. Based on the factor analysis results, the four items represented one construct. The composite index 'perceived immigrant threat' score was calculated by summing the values on each of the items and then dividing by four (the total number of items). The Cronbach's test of the composite index showed it to be reliable at $\alpha = 0.69$.

Table 4.1 Pattern Matrix from Factor (Principal Components) Analysis (Varimax Rotation)
(n=1,028)

Four Key Independent Variables	Perceived Threat (Eigenvalue = 2.14) Factor loadings
Perceived immigrant threat to the crime rate	0.73
Perceived immigrant threat to the economy	0.82
Perceived immigrant threat to political power	0.54
Perceived immigrant threat to nativism	0.80
% variance	53.38
Cumulative % variance	53.38

UNIVARIATE RESULTS

Table 4.2 shows the univariate statistics for each of the variables used from the GSS 2004 data in order to examine the hypotheses concerning opposition to increasing the number of immigrants and support for stronger measures to exclude undocumented immigrants. About 25% of the respondents had high levels of opposition to immigrants, 30.8% had moderate opposition, 33% were neutral about the issue, 7.2% had low opposition, and 4% had very low opposition to increasing the number of immigrants. The respondents with high levels of support for stronger measures to exclude undocumented immigrants comprised about one-third (34.8%) of the sample, respondents with moderate support for stronger measures to exclude undocumented immigrants also comprised about one-third of the sample (36.3%), followed by those who were neutral (16.8%), those who had low support (9.4%), and those who had very low support (2.6%) for stronger measures to exclude undocumented immigrants. The mean perceived threat score was 2.83 out of 5, indicating that on average respondents tended to be neutral about perceiving immigrants as threats.

Table 4.2 Descriptive Statistics (2004 GSS) (n=1,028)

	Percent	Frequencies
Dependent variables		
Opposition to immigrants		
Very Low opposition	3.99	41
Low opposition	7.20	74
Neutral	33.17	341
Moderate opposition	30.84	317
High opposition	24.81	255
Support for stronger measures to		
exclude undocumented immigrants	2.63	27
Very Low support	9.44	97
Low support	16.83	173
Neutral	36.28	373
Moderate support	34.82	358
High support		
Demographic/Control Variables		
Race/Ethnicity	81.52	838
White	12.55	129
Black	5.93	61
Other		
Immigration Status		
Non-immigrant	90.56	931
Immigrant	9.44	97
Gender		
Male	45.72	470
Female	54.28	558
Education		
Less than high school	9.44	97
High school	50.88	523
Associate/Junior college	8.17	84
Bachelor's	21.21	218
Graduate	10.31	106
Social Class		
Lower	5.64	58
Working	39.68	408
Middle	51.65	531
Upper	3.02	31
Political Identification		
Republican	34.63	356
Democrat	33.95	349
Independent	31.42	323

	Mean	SD	Range
Independent variable			
Perceived threat	2.83	0.77	Min = 1, Max = 5

The demographic characteristics of respondents are also shown in Table 4.2. Of

the entire sample 81.5% were White, 12.6% were Black, and 5.9% were members of

other race/ethnic groups. Non-immigrants comprised 90.6% of the sample and 9.4% were immigrants. In the sample, 45.7% of respondents were male and 54.3% were female. About one-half (50.9%) of respondents had a high school degree, followed by those with a bachelor's degree (21.2%), those with a graduate degree (10.3%), those with less than high school (9.4%), and those with an associate's degree (8.2%). For self-reported social class, middle class comprised over half (51.7%) of the sample, 39.7% considered themselves to be part of the working class, 5.6% indicated that they were part of the lower class, and respondents who categorized themselves as upper class comprised 3% of the sample. About one-third (34.6%) of the sample is Republican, followed by Democrats (34%), and Independents (31.4%).

BIVARIATE RESULTS

In order to examine bivariate relationships between the categories of the two dependent variables and the continuous independent variable of perceived threat, analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted. Separate chi-square (χ^2) analyses were conducted to examine bivariate relationships between each of the dependent variables by each of the demographic control variables. Statistically significant differences in each of the dependent variables by each of the control variables can be determined by these analyses. Analysis of variance (ANOVA) was also conducted to examine the bivariate relationships between perceived threat and the control variables. These analyses enabled determination of whether there were mean differences in perceived threat across categories of the control variables.

Table 4.3 shows the results of the analysis of variance (ANOVA) examining the mean differences in perceived threat index scores across the categories of the first

dependent variable (opposition to immigrants). Differences in mean perceived threat scores across levels of opposition to increasing the number of immigrants were statistically significant ($p<.001$). The results showed that as respondents' perceived threat score increased the levels of opposition to immigrants increased as well.

Table 4.3 Results of Bivariate Analyses (Opposition to Immigrants) (n=1,028)

Mean Difference among Composite Index Perceived Threat Score across Categories of Opposition to Immigrants (ANOVA)

	Mean				
	Very Low	Low	Neutral	Moderate	High
Perceived Threat***	2.32	2.23	2.45	2.90	3.48
(Min = 1, Max = 5)	(0.81)	(0.68)	(0.54)	(0.57)	(0.78)

Percent Differences among the Categories of Opposition to Immigrants by Control Variables (Chi-square test of independence)

	% Very Low	% Low	% Neutral	% Moderate	% High
Race/Ethnicity***					
White	2.74	6.21	31.98	32.10	26.97
Black	6.98	10.85	32.56	28.68	20.93
Other	14.75	13.11	50.85	18.03	3.28
		χ^2 =54.10, 8 df, p<0.001			
Immigration Status***					
Non-immigrant	3.11	5.80	31.79	32.65	26.64
Immigrant	12.37	20.62	46.39	13.40	7.22
		χ^2 =75.23, 4 df, p<0.001			
Gender					
Male	3.83	7.45	33.19	29.79	25.74
Female	4.12	6.99	33.15	31.72	24.01
		χ^2 =0.75, 4 df, p=0.946			
Education***					
Less than high school	7.22	8.23	23.71	23.71	37.11
High school	3.82	5.35	28.30	33.65	28.87
Associate/Junior college	2.38	7.14	34.52	27.38	28.57
Bachelor's	2.29	9.63	41.74	32.11	14.22
Graduate	6.60	10.38	47.17	23.58	12.26
		χ^2 =61.55, 16 df, p<0.001			
Social Class					
Lower	3.42	10.34	22.41	25.86	37.93
Working	3.68	6.86	30.88	32.35	26.23
Middle	4.14	6.78	36.16	30.70	22.22
Upper	6.45	12.90	32.26	22.58	25.81
		χ^2 =14.40, 12 df, p=0.276			
Political Identification***					
Democrat	4.78	10.96	33.71	29.37	22.19
Independent	6.02	6.02	35.82	26.65	25.50
Republican	0.93	4.33	29.72	38.08	26.96
		χ^2 =34.82, 8 df, p<0.001			

Standard deviations are in parentheses. *p < .05   **p < .01   ***p < .001

For the relationship between race/ethnicity and opposition to increasing the number of immigrants, Whites were more opposed than other groups. Less than 10% of Whites had very low and low opposition, 32% were neutral, and more than half (59.1%) had moderate or high opposition to immigrants. For Blacks, 17.8% had very low or low opposition, 32.6% were neutral, and 49.6% had moderate or high opposition to immigrants. Among respondents of other race/ethnic groups, 27.9% had very low and low opposition to immigrants, 50.9% were neutral, and 21.3% had moderate or high opposition to immigrants. This relationship between race/ethnicity and immigration policy views was statistically significant as indicated by the chi-square test of independence (χ^2 =54.10, 8 df, $p<0.001$). Overall, Whites, followed by Blacks and members of other race/ethnic groups, tended to have higher levels of opposition to immigrants.

Immigration status was related to immigrant beliefs. Non-immigrants were more opposed than immigrants. For non-immigrants, 8.9% had very low or low opposition, 31.8% were neutral, and 59.3% had moderate or high opposition to immigrants. Among immigrants, 33% had very low or low opposition, 46.4% were neutral, and 20.6% had moderate or high opposition. The relationship between immigration status and opposition to increasing the number of immigrants was statistically significant as indicated by the chi-square test of independence (χ^2 =75.23, 4 df, $p<0.001$).

As Table 4.3 also shows, several of the demographic and control variables were related to immigration policy views with the exception of gender and social class. The relationship between gender and opposition to increasing the number of immigrants was

not statistically significant as indicated by the chi-square test of independence (χ^2=0.75, 4 df, p=0.946).

The relationship between social class and opposition to increasing the number of immigrants was also not statistically significant as indicated by the chi-square test of independence (χ^2=14.40, 12 df, p=0.276).

For the relationship between education and opposition to immigrants, respondents with a high school degree or less were more opposed than other groups. Of respondents with less than high school, 15.4% had very low or low opposition, 23.7% were neutral, and 60.8% had moderate or high opposition. Among those with a high school degree, 9.2% had very low or low opposition, 28.3% were neutral, and 62.5% had moderate or high opposition. Respondents with a graduate degree were less opposed to immigrants than other groups: 17% had very low or low opposition, 47.2% were neutral, and 35.8% had moderate or high opposition to immigrants. This relationship was statistically significant as indicated by the chi-square test of independence (χ^2=61.55, 16 df, p<0.001). Overall, respondents with higher levels of opposition to immigrants had lower levels of education.

Political party was significantly related to immigration policy views. Republicans were more opposed than Independents and Democrats. For Republicans, 5.3% had very low or low opposition, 29.7% were neutral, and 65% had moderate or high opposition to immigrants. Among Independents, 12% had very low or low opposition, 35.8% were neutral, and 52.2% had moderate or high opposition to immigrants. For Democrats, 15.4% had very low or low opposition to immigrants, 33.7% were neutral, and 51.6% had moderate or high opposition to immigrants. The relationship between political

identification and opposition to increasing the number of immigrants was statistically significant as indicated by the chi-square test of independence ($\chi^2 =34.82$, 8 df, $p<0.001$). Overall, Republicans, followed by Independents and Democrats, have higher levels of opposition to immigrants.

Table 4.4 presents the results of the analysis of variance (ANOVA) among the independent variables across levels of support for stronger measures to exclude undocumented immigrants. This table also provides the results of the chi-square (χ^2) analyses of support for stronger measures to exclude undocumented immigrants across each of the control variables.

Perceived threat index means across the categories of support for stronger measures to exclude undocumented immigrants were statistically different ($p<.001$). The results showed that as respondents' perceived threat score increased, the levels of support for stronger measures to exclude undocumented immigrants increased as well.

For the relationship between race/ethnicity and support for stronger measures to exclude undocumented immigrants, Whites were more supportive of stronger measures to exclude undocumented immigrants than members of other race/ethnic groups. Among Whites, 10.6% had very low or low support, 15.4% were neutral, and 74% had moderate or high support for stronger measures to exclude undocumented immigrants. For Blacks, 16.3% had very low or low support, 23.3% were neutral, and 60.5% had moderate or high support. Among members of other race/ethnic groups, 23% had very low or low opposition, 23% were neutral, and 54.1% had moderate or high support for stronger measures to exclude undocumented immigrants. This relationship was statistically significant as indicated by the chi-square test of independence ($\chi^2 =27.13$, 16 df, $p<0.01$).

Overall, Whites followed by Blacks and members of other race/ethnic groups, had greater

support for stronger measures to exclude undocumented immigrants.

Table 4.4 Results of Bivariate Analyses (Support for Stronger Measures to Exclude Undocumented
          Immigrants) (n=1,028)

Mean Differences of Composite Index Perceived Threat Score across Categories of Support for Stronger Measures to Exclude Undocumented Immigrants (ANOVA)

	Mean				
	Very Low	Low	Neutral	Moderate	High
*Perceived Threat***	2.25	2.40	2.66	2.81	3.09
(Min = 1, Max = 5)	(1.29)	(0.58)	(0.59)	(0.64)	(0.847

Percent Differences among the Categories of Support for Support for Stronger Measures to Exclude Undocumented Immigrants by Control Variables (Chi-square test of independence)

	% Very Low	% Low	% Neutral	% Moderate	% High
Race/Ethnicity**					
White	2.51	8.11	15.39	36.28	37.71
Black	2.33	13.95	23.26	37.98	22.48
Other	4.92	18.03	22.95	32.79	21.31
	χ^2 =27.13, 16 df, *p*<0.01				
Immigration Status**					
Non-immigrant	2.47	8.59	16.33	36.31	36.31
Immigrant	4.12	17.53	21.65	36.08	20.62
	χ^2 =16.03, 4 df, *p*<0.01				
Gender					
Male	2.13	8.51	14.04	37.66	37.66
Female	3.05	10.22	19.18	35.13	32.44
	χ^2 =8.05, 4 df, *p*=0.090				
Education					
Less than high school	1.03	5.15	17.53	41.24	35.05
High school	2.49	9.94	16.06	26.99	36.52
Associate/Junior college	3.57	9.52	20.24	35.71	30.95
Bachelor's	2.29	11.01	16.51	36.70	33.49
Graduate	4.72	7.55	17.92	37.74	32.08
	χ^2 =9.11, 16 df, *p*=0.909				
Social Class					
Lower	1.72	8.62	22.41	25.86	41.38
Working	2.70	10.78	18.63	34.56	33.33
Middle	2.64	8.66	14.88	38.79	35.03
Upper	3.23	6.45	16.13	35.48	38.71
	χ^2 =8.87, 12 df, *p*=0.714				
Political Identification***					
Democrat	3.93	12.64	22.19	36.52	24.72
Independent	3.15	8.31	17.48	34.10	36.96
Republican	0.62	7.12	10.22	38.39	43.65

Standard deviations are in parentheses.
p < .05   **p* < .01   ***p* < .001

Immigration status was related to immigration policy views. Non-immigrants had more support for stronger measures to exclude undocumented immigrants than immigrants. For non-immigrants, 11.1% had very low or low support, 16.3% were neutral, and 72.6% had moderate or high support for stronger measures to exclude undocumented immigrants. Among immigrants, 21.7% had very low or low support, 21.7% were neutral, and 56.7% had moderate or high support. The relationship between immigration status and support for stronger measures to exclude undocumented immigrants was statistically significant as indicated by the chi-square test of independence ($\chi^2 = 16.03$, 4 df, $p < 0.01$).

The results of the chi-square (χ^2) analyses examining relationships between support for stronger measures to exclude undocumented immigrants by each of the demographic and control variables are also shown in Table 4.4. Several of these variables were related to support for stronger measures to exclude undocumented immigrants. However, the relationships between gender and support for stronger measures to exclude undocumented immigrants, education and support for stronger measures, and social class and support for stronger measures to exclude undocumented immigrants were not statically significant, as indicated by the chi-square tests of independence.

Political identification was related to immigration beliefs. Republicans were more supportive of stronger measures to exclude undocumented immigrants than other political affiliations. Among Republicans, 7.7% had very low or low support, 10.2% were neutral, and 82% had moderate or high. For Independents, 11.5% had very low or low support, 17.5% were neutral, and 71.1% had moderate or high support for stronger measures to exclude undocumented immigrants. Among Democrats, 16.6% had very low or low

support, 22.2% were neutral, and 61.3% had moderate or high support. The relationship between political identification and support for stronger measures to exclude immigrants was statistically significant as indicated by the chi-square test of independence (χ^2 =47.36, 8 df, $p<0.001$). Overall, Republicans followed by Independents and Democrats had moderate or high levels of support for stronger measures to exclude undocumented immigrants.

The results of the analysis of variance (ANOVA) conducted to examine the bivariate relationships between the independent variable of perceived threat and the categories of each of the control variables are shown in Table 4.5. These analyses enabled determination of whether there were mean differences in the perceived threat index scores across the categories of the control variables.

Table 4.5 shows the average of the perceived threat index scores by each of the demographic and control variables (race/ethnicity, immigration status, gender, education, social class, and political identification). As the results showed, the mean perceived threat scores were different across racial/ethnic categories ($p < .001$), across immigrant status categories ($p < .001$), across education categories ($p<.001$), across social class categories ($p < .01$), and across political affiliation categories ($p < .001$). The results indicated that Whites, followed by Blacks and members of other race/ethnic groups, had higher levels of perceived threat. Non-immigrants had higher levels of perceived threat than immigrants. Respondents with graduate degrees had lower levels of perceived immigrant threat than those with less education. Members of the lower class perceived more threat from immigrants than those of the working, middle, and upper class. Republicans had higher levels of perceived threat than Independents and Democrats.

Table 4.5   Mean Differences of Composite Index Perceived Threat Score by Control Variables (n=1,028)

	Perceived Threat (Min = 1, Max = 5)		
	Mean	SD	Frequency
Race/Ethnicity***			
White	2.87	0.77	838
Black	2.81	0.72	129
Other	2.28	0.65	61
Immigration Status***			
Non-immigrant	2.88	0.75	931
Immigrant	2.27	0.72	97
Gender			
Male	2.81	0.80	470
Female	2.84	0.74	558
Education***			
Less than High School	3.15	0.77	97
High School	2.93	0.76	523
Junior College	2.94	0.78	84
Bachelor	2.62	0.70	218
Graduate	2.34	0.68	106
Social Class***			
Lower	3.12	0.77	58
Working	2.90	0.76	408
Middle	2.74	0.76	531
Upper	2.67	0.84	31
Political Identification***			
Democrat	2.71	0.79	356
Independent	2.86	0.84	349
Republican	2.92	0.65	323

ANOVA = Analysis of Variance
*$p < .05$ **$p < .01$ ***$p < .001$

MULTIVARIATE RESULTS

Table 4.6 and Table 4.7 show the results of the four ordered logistic regression (OLR) models estimated for the dependent variables opposition to immigrants and support for stronger measures to exclude undocumented immigrants, respectively. The first model included only the independent variable of perceived threat. Model 2 included race/ethnicity. Immigration status was added in the third model. In the fourth model, the remaining demographic and control variables (gender, education, social class, and political identification) were included. For all four models in each table, the ordered log-

odds (coefficients) and the odds ratio were reported.[4] The standard errors are shown in parentheses.

The results of the ordered logistic regression analysis for opposition to increasing the number of immigrants and perceived threat are shown in Table 4.6. Model 1 included only opposition to immigrants regressed on perceived threat. This result showed that a one unit increase in perceived threat resulted in a statistically significant increase in the ordered log-odds (1.72) of being in a higher opposition category (OR=5.61). That is, respondents with higher levels of perceived threat were 5.61 times as likely to oppose immigrants. Consistent with the first hypothesis of this dissertation, the result of this model indicated that perceived threat was significantly related to opposition to immigrants. The likelihood ratio for this model was 401.97 ($p<.001$).

Race/ethnicity were included in Model 2. After introducing the race/ethnicity measures, perceived threat remained a significant predictor of opposition to increasing the number of immigrants. The results from Model 2 were still consistent with hypothesis 1, although the decrease in the log-odds and odds ratio of perceived threat in this model indicated that some opposition to immigrants was due to effects of race/ethnicity. The second model also showed that the ordered log-odds (b=-0.48, OR=0.62) for Blacks and other race/ethnic groups (b=-0.90, OR=0.41) were significantly less than Whites. These results provided support for hypothesis 2. That is, compared to Whites, Blacks were 62% less likely to oppose immigrants and other members of other race/ethnic groups were 41% less likely to oppose immigrants. The likelihood ratio of this model was 420.09 ($p<.001$).

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[4] The odds ratio $= e^{coefficient}$. The formula to covert the odds ratio into percentages is as follows: ($[e^b-1]100$) (Powers and Xie, 2000)

Table 4.6 Results from Ordered Logistic Regression of Opposition to Documented Immigrants (n=1,028)

	Model 1			Model 2			Model 3			Model 4		
	Coef.	(S.E.)	OR	Coef.	(S.E.)	OR	Coef.	(S.E.)	OR	Coef.	(S.E.)	OR
Perceived Threat	1.72***	(0.09)	5.61	1.68***	(0.10)	5.39	1.63***	(0.10)	5.13	1.59***	(0.10)	4.92
Race/Ethnicity												
Black				-0.48**	(0.18)	0.62	-0.45*	(0.18)	0.63	-0.47*	(0.19)	0.63
Other				-0.90***	(0.25)	0.41	-0.60*	(0.27)	0.55	-0.58*	(0.27)	0.56
Immigration Status												
Immigrant							-0.73**	(0.22)	0.48	-0.72**	(0.22)	0.49
Gender												
Male										0.09	(0.12)	1.09
Education												
Less than High School										0.12	(0.30)	1.12
High School										0.27	(0.21)	1.31
Junior College										0.17	(0.29)	1.19
Bachelor										-0.04	(0.22)	0.96
Social Class												
Lower										0.21	(0.45)	1.24
Working										0.16	(0.37)	1.17
Middle										0.11	(0.36)	1.19
Political Identification												
Democrat										-0.15	(0.15)	0.86
Independent										-0.25	(0.15)	0.78
Cut Point 1	0.99	(0.27)	0.99	0.72	(0.28)	0.72	0.47	(0.29)	0.47	0.43	(0.47)	0.43
Cut Point 2	2.21	(0.25)	2.21	1.96	(0.25)	1.96	1.74	(0.26)	1.74	1.70	(0.46)	1.70
Cut Point 3	4.50	(0.27)	4.50	4.29	(0.27)	4.29	4.11	(0.28)	4.11	4.09	(0.47)	4.09
Cut point 4	6.31	(0.31)	6.31	6.10	(0.31)	6.10	5.93	(0.31)	5.93	5.92	(0.49)	5.92
Likelihood ratio	401.97***			420.09***			431.04***			440.03***		

Standard errors are in parentheses. Omitted variables are female (for gender), White (for race/ethnicity), non-immigrant (for immigrant status), graduate degree (for education), upper (for social class), and Republican (for political identification).
*$p < .05$ **$p < .01$ ***$p < .001$

Model 3 included immigration status. The results of this model showed that perceived threat and race/ethnicity were significant predictor of opposition to immigrants. Thus, the results were still consistent with hypotheses 1 and 2; although the decrease in the log-odds and odds ratio of these two variables in Model 3 indicated that some opposition to immigrants was due to effects of immigration status. Model 3 showed that the ordered log-odds (-0.73) for immigrants were significantly less than for non-immigrants (OR=0.48), a finding consistent with hypothesis 3. That is, immigrants were 48% less likely than non-immigrants to oppose immigrants. The likelihood ratio for this model was 431.04 (p<.001).

The remaining demographic and control variables were included in Model 4. The results provided support for hypotheses 1, 2, and 3. As the model showed, perceived threat, race/ethnicity, and immigration status were significant predictors of opposition to immigrants. This indicated that their effects were robust even when controlling for other variables. On the other hand, education, social class, and political identification were not statistically significant (p>.05) predictors of opposition to immigrants. The likelihood ratio for this model was 440.03 (p<.001).

Table 4.7 shows the ordered logistic regression results for support for stronger measures to exclude undocumented immigrants. Model 1 of Table 4.7 shows that a one unit increase in perceived threat resulted in a statistically significant increase in the ordered log-odds of being in a higher support category (b=0.82, OR=2.27). That is, respondents with higher levels of perceived threat were 2.27 times as likely to have greater support for stronger measures to exclude undocumented immigrants. Consistent with hypothesis 4, the result indicated that perceived threat was significantly related to

support for stronger measures to exclude undocumented immigrants. The likelihood ratio

for this model was 104.32 (*p*<.001).

Table 4.7 Results from Ordered Logistic Regression of Support for Measures to Exclude Undocumented Immigrants (n=1,028)

	Model 1			Model 2			Model 3			Model 4		
	Coef.	(S.E.)	OR	Coef.	(S.E.)	OR	Coef.	(S.E.)	OR	Coef.	(S.E.)	OR
Perceived Threat	0.82***	(0.08)	2.27	0.80***	(0.08)	2.23	0.79***	(0.09)	2.20	0.81***	(0.09)	2.24
Race/Ethnicity												
Black				-0.65***	(0.17)	0.52	-0.65***	(0.17)	0.52	-0.40*	(0.18)	0.67
Other				-0.47	(0.25)	0.62	-0.38	(0.27)	0.69	-0.34	(0.27)	0.71
Immigration Status												
Immigrant							-0.21	(0.22)	0.81	-0.18	(0.22)	0.83
Gender												
Male										0.30**	(0.12)	1.36
Education												
Less than High School										-0.14	(0.29)	0.87
High School										-0.19	(0.21)	0.82
Junior College										-0.34	(0.29)	0.71
Bachelor										-0.18	(0.22)	0.84
Social Class												
Lower										-0.11	(0.44)	0.89
Working										-0.35	(0.36)	0.70
Middle										-0.16	(0.35)	0.85
Political Identification												
Democrat										-0.70***	(0.15)	0.49
Independent										-0.25	(0.15)	0.78
Cut Point 1	-1.46	(0.29)	-1.46	-1.65	(0.29)	-1.65	-1.70	(0.30)	-1.70	-2.59	(0.47)	-2.59
Cut Point 2	0.22	(0.24)	0.22	0.04	(0.25)	0.04	-0.02	(0.25)	-0.02	-0.88	(0.44)	-0.88
Cut Point 3	1.36	(0.24)	1.36	1.20	(0.24)	1.20	1.14	(0.25)	1.14	0.30	(0.44)	0.30
Cut point 4	3.00	(0.25)	3.00	2.85	(0.26)	2.85	2.80	(0.26)	2.80	2.01	(0.44)	2.01
Likelihood ratio	104.32***			120.74***			121.67***			159.53***		

Standard errors are in parentheses. Omitted variables are female (for gender), White (for race/ethnicity), non-immigrant (for immigrant status), graduate degree (for education), upper (for social class), and Republican (for political identification).
*p < .05   **p < .01   ***p < .001

Race/ethnicity were included in Model 2 of Table 4.7. Perceived threat remained a significant predictor of support for stronger measures to exclude undocumented immigrants even when controlling for race/ethnicity. These results in Model 2 still supported hypothesis 4, although the decrease in the log-odds and odds ratio of perceived threat in this model indicated that some of the support for stronger measures was due to effects of race/ethnicity. The second model also showed that the ordered log-odds for Blacks (-0.65) was significantly less than for Whites (OR=0.52). That is, compared to Whites, Blacks were 52% less likely to support for stronger measures to exclude undocumented immigrants. Although the percentage of members of other race/ethnic groups who support stronger measures to exclude undocumented immigrants was less than that of Whites, the difference was not statistically significant ($p>.05$). That means that members of other race/ethnic groups were not significantly different from Whites in their support for stronger measures to exclude undocumented immigrants. These results thus provided partial support for hypothesis 5. The likelihood ratio of this model was 120.74 ($p<.001$).

Model 3 included immigration status. The results of this model showed that perceived threat and being Black were significant predictors of support for stronger measures to exclude undocumented immigrants. Thus, the results were still consistent with hypothesis 4. The decrease in the log-odds and odds ratios of these two variables in Model 3, relative to Model 2, indicated that some of the support for stronger measures to exclude undocumented immigrants was due to effects of immigration status. The results of Model 3 showed that immigrants and non-immigrants did not significantly differ in their levels of support for stronger measures to exclude undocumented immigrants

(p>.05). This was not consistent with hypothesis 6. That is, when compared to the native-born, immigrants were similar in their support for stronger measures to exclude undocumented immigrants. The likelihood ratio for this model was 121.67 (p<.001).

The remaining demographic and control variables were included in Model 4. The results provided support for hypothesis 1 but not for hypotheses 2 and 3. As the model showed, perceived threat was a significant predictor of support for stronger measures to exclude undocumented immigrants. Also, the slight increase in the log-odds and odds ratio of perceived threat, race/ethnicity, and immigration status indicated that some of the support for stronger measures was due to the demographic and control variables. There were two demographic and control variables that were significant predictors of support for stronger measures to exclude undocumented immigrants. Results of Model 4 indicated that the ordered log-odds for males (0.30) was significantly more than females, while holding constant all the other variables. The result indicated that males were 36% more likely than females support for stronger measures. These results also showed that the ordered log-odds for Democrats (-0.70) was significantly less than Republicans (OR=0.49), while holding constant all the other variables. This indicated that compared to Republicans, Democrats were 49% less likely to support stronger measures to exclude undocumented immigrants. However, other minority groups, Independents, immigration status, education and social class were not statistically significant (p>.05) predictors of support for stronger measures to exclude undocumented immigrants. The likelihood ratio for this model was 159.53 (p>.001).

In order to assess the models' assumptions and the level of multicollinearity among predictors, variance inflation factors (VIF) were obtained. The variance inflation

factors (VIF) for all eight models yielded VIF values less than 10. These values indicated that there was no multicollinearity among the set of the various variables (Chatterjee, Hadi, and Price 2000). The highest VIF values were for the dummy variables working class (9.10) and middle class (8.91).

SUMMARY

Factor analysis results presented in this chapter showed that the different immigrant threat items represented a common construct. After presenting the descriptive statistics, bivariate and multivariate analyses were conducted. The results of the bivariate analyses showed that perceived immigrant threat varied across the categories of opposition to immigrants and of support for stronger measures to exclude undocumented immigrants. Ordered logistic regression results for opposition to increasing the number of immigrants and for support for stronger measures to exclude undocumented immigrants indicated that higher levels of perceived threat are associated with higher levels of opposition to immigrants even when holding constant all the other variables. Additionally, Blacks and other race/ethnic groups relative to Whites; and immigrants relative to non-immigrants, were less likely to oppose immigrants. The results for support for stronger measures to exclude undocumented immigrants also showed that male respondents, Blacks, and Democrats were less likely to support stronger measures when compared to their respective counterparts. Although other race/ethnic groups were also less likely to support stronger measures to exclude undocumented immigrants when compared to Whites, this result was not statistically significant ($p>.05$). Similarly, immigrants were not significantly different from non-immigrants in levels of support for

stronger measures to exclude undocumented immigrants. Thus, hypotheses 1-4 were supported, hypothesis 5 was partially supported, and hypothesis 6 was not supported.

In the following chapter, Chapter 5 – Results for Immigrants' Involvement in Crime – the results of the analytical procedures used to examine the relationship between immigrants' strains, transnational ties, and crime are presented.

CHAPTER 5

RESULTS FOR IMMIGRANTS' INVOLVEMENT IN CRIME

The following chapter provides the results of analyses concerning the effects of immigrants' strains on crime and the effects of transnational ties on immigrant involvement in crime. The descriptive statistics for all variables considered in these analyses are presented in the first section of this chapter. The bivariate results are shown in the second section. The multivariate analyses are presented in the third section of this chapter.

DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

Table 5.1 shows the descriptive statistics for the dependent variable, the independent variables, the conditioning variables, and the control items. About 93% of respondents had not been arrested during the previous five years and about 7% had been arrested. Almost half of the sample was comprised of native-born Americans (47.8%) and the other half was comprised of long-term immigrants (40%) and short-term immigrants (12.3%). Respondents with an occupation in the primary labor market comprised 46.8% of the sample, followed by those who were employed in the secondary labor market (43.8%), those who had other types of occupation (3.5%), and those who had no occupation (5.9%). Just over one-half (53.7%) of the respondents had been discriminated against due to their race or ethnicity and 44.3% had not. Of the sample, 5.5% had lived in their country of origin longer than six months and 94.5% had not. Males comprised 44.7% of the sample and females comprised the other portion. About 47.2% were Latinos, followed by Asians (38.4%), members of other race/ethnic groups (6.1%), Blacks (5%), and Whites (3.3%).

Table 5.1 Descriptive Statistics (CILS) (n=1,649)

	Percent Distribution			Mean	
	%	Frequency		Means	Range
Dependent variable			**Independent variables**		
Arrest					
No	92.97	1,533	English Proficiency	3.81	Min=1, Max=4
Yes	7.03	116			
Independent variables			Family Cohesiveness	3.59	Min=1, Max=5
Immigration Status					
Native-born	47.79	788			
Long-term	39.96	659	**Conditioning variables**		
Short-term	12.25	202			
Occupation			Self-Esteem	3.43	Min=1, Max=4
Primary	46.82	772			
Secondary	43.78	722	Money Importance	2.38	Min=1, Max=3
Other	3.46	57			
No occupation	5.94	98	Religiosity	3.88	Min=1, Max=8
Discrimination					
No	44.27	730	Transnational ties		
Yes	55.73	919	Trips back home	2.09	Min=1, Max=9
Conditioning variable					
Transnational ties			Remittance	1.62	Min=1, Max=6
Live in country of origin					
No	94.48	1,558	**Control variable**		
Yes	5.52	91	Income*	7.36	Min=1, Max=12
Control variables					
Gender					
Female	55.31	912			
Male	44.69	737			
Race/Ethnicity					
White	3.34	55			
Black	4.97	82			
Latino	47.24	779			
Asian	38.39	633			
Other	6.06	100			

Standard deviations are shown in parentheses.
*Income ordered categories: 1=Less than $5,000, 2=$5,000-$9,999, 3=$10,000-$14,999, 4=$15,000-$19,999, 5=$20,000-$24,999, 6=$25,000-$29,999, 7=$30,000-$34,999, 8=$35,000-$49,999, 9=$50,000-$74,999, 10=$75,000-$99,999, 11=$100,000-$199,999, 12=$200,000 or more.

Respondents' mean English proficiency score was 3.8 out of 4, which indicated a high proficiency level. The family cohesiveness mean score was 3.6 out of 5, indicating high levels of family cohesiveness. Mean self-esteem score was 3.4 out of 4, which indicated high levels of self-esteem. The mean money importance score was 2.4 out of 3,

indicating that respondents placed high importance on money. The religiosity mean score was 3.9 out of 8, which indicated that the respondents' religiosity level was in the mid-range. Mean score for trips back home was 2.1 out of 9, indicating that respondents on average took just over 2 trips back to their country of origin. The remittance mean score was 1.6 out of 6, which indicated that respondents have sent remittances less than two times during their lives. The mean income score of 7.4 out of 12 indicated that respondents' family yearly average income was between $30,000 and $34,999.

BIVARIATE RESULTS

The results of separate chi-square (χ^2) contingency analyses of the dependent variable (arrest) across categories of each of the categorical independent and control variables are shown in Table 5.2. This analysis enabled determination of whether statistically significant differences existed in the dependent variable by each of the independent and control categorical variables.

As Table 5.2 shows, about 8.5% of native-born Americans had an arrest. Among long-term immigrants 6.4% had an arrest, while 3.5% of short-term immigrants had an arrest. The relationship between immigration status and arrest was statistically significant as indicated by the chi-square test of independence (χ^2=6.97, 2df, p<.05). Thus, the native-born population was more likely than long- and short-term immigrants to have an arrest.

Several of the independent variables were not related to whether respondents have been arrested. Among these variables, occupation and discrimination were not significantly related to arrest as indicated by the chi-square tests of independence (χ^2=2.78, 3df, p= 0.43; χ^2=2.62, 1df, p=11; and χ^2=2.30, 1df, p=0.13, respectively).

Table 5.2 Percent Differences among the Categories of Arrest by All Categorical Variables (n=1,649)

	Arrest			
	% No	Frequency (n=1,533)	% Yes	Frequency (n=116)
Immigration Status*				
Native-born	91.50	721	8.50	67
Long-term	93.63	617	6.37	42
Short-term	96.53	195	3.47	7
		χ^2=6.97, 2df, p<.05		
Occupation				
Primary	93.52	722	6.48	50
Secondary	91.97	664	8.03	58
Other	92.98	53	7.02	4
No occupation	95.92	94	4.08	4
		χ^2=2.78, 3df, p= 0.428		
Discrimination				
No	94.11	687	5.89	43
Yes	92.06	846	7.94	73
		χ^2=2.62, 1df, p= 0.105		
Money Importance**				
Not important	93.90	77	6.10	5
Somewhat important	94.91	820	5.09	44
Very important	90.47	636	9.53	67
		χ^2=11.79, 2df, p<.01		
Transnational Tie (Live in country of origin)				
No	93.20	1,452	6.80	106
Yes	89.01	81	10.99	10
		χ^2=2.30, 1df, p= 0.129		
Gender**				
Female	97.70	891	2.30	21
Male	87.11	642	12.89	95
		χ^2=69.87, 1df, p<.000		
Race/Ethnicity*				
White	98.18	54	1.82	1
Black	91.46	75	8.54	7
Latino	91.40	712	8.60	67
Asian	95.10	602	4.90	31
Other	90.00	90	10.00	10
		χ^2=11.26, 4df, p<.05		

Chi-Square Test of Independence
*p < .05   **p < .01   ***p < .001

Money importance was associated with having an arrest. Of respondents who believed that having lots of money was not important, 6% had an arrest. Among respondents who believed that having money was somewhat important, 5.1% had an arrest. Of those who believed that having money was very important, 9.5% had an arrest.

The relationship between money importance and arrest was statistically significant as indicated by the chi-square test of independence (χ^2=11.79, 2df, p<.01). Overall, respondents who place great importance on having money were more likely to have an arrest than those who did not believe having money was important.

A third factor not related to arrest was transnational ties as measured by living in the country of origin. The relationship between living in the country of origin longer than six months and arrest was not statistically significant as indicated by the chi-square test of independence (χ^2=2.30, 1df, p=0.11).

Gender was related to arrest. Among males, 12.9% had an arrest compared to 2.3% of females. The relationship between gender and arrest was statistically significant as indicated by the chi-square test of independence (χ^2=69.87, 1df, p<.000).

Race/ethnicity were related to arrest. Of White respondents 1.8% had an arrest. Among Blacks, 8.5% had an arrest while about 8.6% of Latinos had an arrest. Of the respondents who were Asian, 4.9% had an arrest. Ten percent of respondents who were members of another racial/ethnic group had an arrest. The relationship between race/ethnicity and arrest was statistically significant as indicated by the chi-square test of independence (χ^2=11.26, 4df, p<.05). Thus, members of other racial/ethnic groups, Latinos, and Blacks were more likely to have an arrest than Whites and Asians.

Table 5.3 shows the results of the analysis for mean differences (two-sample t-test) among the categories of arrest by each of the continuous independent variables. The results showed that English proficiency, family cohesiveness, self-esteem, number of trips back home, frequency of remittances, and income were not associated with whether respondents reported an arrest (p>.05). However, frequency of attending a religious

service was associated with whether the respondent was arrested (*p*<.01). This indicated that respondents who attended religious services more frequently were less likely to report an arrest than those who attended religious services less frequently.

Table 5.3 Mean Differences among Categories of Arrest by Continuous Variables (n=1,647)

	Arrest		
	No	Yes	
	Mean (n=1,533)	Mean (n=116)	Range
Independent variables			
English Proficiency	3.81	3.82	Min=1, Max=4
Family Cohesiveness	3.60	3.47	Min=1, Max=5
Conditioning variables			
Self-esteem	3.43	3.40	Min=1, Max=4
Religiosity**	3.91	3.39	Min=1, Max=8
Transnational Tie (Trips back home)	2.06	2.42	Min=1, Max=9
Transnational Tie (Remittance)	1.63	1.49	Min=1, Max=6
Control variable			
Income	7.39	7.05	Min=1, Max=12

Two Sample t-test
Income ordered categories: 1=Less than $5,000, 2=$5,000-$9,999, 3=$10,000-$14,999, 4=$15,000-$19,999, 5=$20,000-$24,999, 6=$25,000-$29,999, 7=$30,000-$34,999, 8=$35,000-$49,999, 9=$50,000-$74,999, 10=$75,000-$99,999, 11=$100,000-$199,999, 12=$200,000 or more.
*$p < .05$ **$p < .01$ ***$p < .001$

MULTIVARIATE RESULTS

Table 5.4 shows the results of the estimated Models (1-6) employing binomial logistic regression for arrest regressed on immigration status, English proficiency, occupation, discrimination, family cohesiveness, and transnational ties (trips back home, remittance, live in country of origin). Model 1 included the independent variable, immigration status. In Model 2 the control variables of gender, race/ethnicity, and income were included and immigration status was excluded. Model 3 included immigration status and all the control variables. Immigrants' strains (English proficiency, occupation in the secondary labor market, and discrimination) and the other strain, family cohesiveness, were included in Model 4. The fifth model included the conditioning factors of self-

esteem, money importance, and social support as measured by religiosity. Model 6 included the transnational ties items as measured by trips back home, remittance, and living in country of origin longer than six months. For all six models, the coefficients and odds ratios were reported.[5] The standard errors are shown in parentheses.

Table 5.4 Results of Binomial Logistic Regression of Arrest Regressed on Independent and Conditioning Variables (N=1,649)[6]

	Model 1			Model 2			Model 3		
	Coef.	(S.E.)	OR	Coef.	(S.E.)	OR	Coef.	(S.E.)	OR
Immigration Status									
Short-term	-0.95*	(0.41)	0.39	---	---	---	-0.94*	(0.42)	0.39
Long-term	-0.31	(0.20)	0.73	---	---	---	-0.20	(0.21)	0.82
Gender									
Male				1.96***	(0.25)	7.13	1.96***	(0.25)	7.11
Race/ethnicity									
Black				2.02	(1.10)	7.53	2.14	(1.10)	8.50
Latino				1.88	(1.02)	6.58	1.99	(1.03)	7.35
Asian				1.16	(1.03)	3.20	1.34	(1.04)	3.83
Other				2.20*	(1.07)	9.05	2.24*	(1.07)	9.39
Income				-0.07	(0.04)	0.93	-0.07*	(0.04)	0.93
Likelihood ratio		7.68*			95.51***			101.91***	

Standard errors are in parentheses. Omitted variables are native-born (for immigration status), female (for gender), White (for race/ethnicity), and primary (for occupation).
*$p < .05$ **$p < .01$ ***$p < .001$

In Model 1, the results of the logistic regression for arrest regressed on immigration status are presented. As the model showed, short-term immigrants were less likely than the native-born to have an arrest (OR=0.73, $p<.05$). The results supported hypothesis 7 but not hypothesis 8 because the percentage of long-term immigrants who reported an arrest was not significantly different than that of the native-born. The likelihood ratio chi-square of this model was 7.68 ($p<.05$).

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[5] The odds ratio = $e^{coefficient}$. The formula to covert the odds ratio into percentages is as follows: ($[e^{b}-1]100$) (Powers and Xie, 2000)
[6] Table 5.4 continued on page 106

Model 2 shows the results of the logistic regression analysis for arrest regressed on gender, race/ethnicity, and income. The results of this model showed that males were more likely than females to have an arrest (OR=7.13, $p<.0001$). Model 2 also showed that members of another race/ethnic group were more likely than Whites to have an arrest (OR=3.43, $p<.05$). The likelihood ratio of this model was 95.91 ($p<.001$).

The independent variable, immigration status, was included along with the control variables in Model 3. After including these variables, Model 3 showed that short term immigrants were less likely than the native-born to have an arrest (OR=0.39, $p<.05$). The results indicated that hypothesis 7 was still supported but hypothesis 8 was not ($p>.05$). The odds ratio for income indicated that the likelihood of having an arrest significantly decreases as income increases (OR=0.93, $p<.05$). Being male and a member of other race/ethnic groups were also significant predictors of having an arrest. Also, the results showed that immigration status is important over and above the effects of race/ethnicity. The likelihood ratio of this model was 101.91 ($p<.001$).

Model 4 included the immigrants' strains and a non-immigrant strain. The results of this model showed that strains did not significantly affect the likelihood of having an arrest ($p>.05$). Thus, these results indicated that hypothesis 9 was not supported. However, the changes in the magnitude of the effects of immigration status and race/ethnicity on the likelihood of having an arrest indicated that part of their apparent effects on likelihood of arrest was due to strains. After including these strain variables, being male and a member of other race/ethnic groups were significant predictors of having an arrest, as in the previous model. However, short-term immigrants and income were no longer significantly associated with having an arrest ($p>.05$). This indicated that

hypothesis 7 is no longer supported. However, it indicated that crime involvement among short-term immigrants was affected by strains. The likelihood ratio of this model was 111.11 (*p*<.001).

Table 5.4 (Continued)

	Model 4			Model 5			Model 6		
	Coef.	(S.E.)	OR	Coef.	(S.E.)	OR	Coef.	(S.E.)	OR
Immigration Status									
Short-term	-0.80	(0.43)	0.45	-0.75	(0.43)	0.47	-0.74	(0.44)	0.47
Long-term	-0.16	(0.22)	0.85	-0.15	(0.22)	0.86	-0.15	(0.22)	0.86
Gender									
Male	1.99***	(0.25)	7.38	1.94***	(0.26)	6.98	1.93***	(0.26)	6.89
Race/ethnicity									
Black	2.08	(1.10)	8.04	2.19*	(1.11)	8.91	2.20*	(1.11)	9.05
Latino	1.98	(1.03)	7.24	1.99	(1.03)	7.31	1.97	(1.03)	7.20
Asian	1.24	(1.04)	3.45	1.19	(1.04)	3.28	1.21	(1.05)	3.36
Other	2.15*	(1.08)	8.54	2.18*	(1.08)	8.87	2.19	(1.08)	8.95
Income	-0.07	(0.04)	0.93	-0.07	(0.04)	0.94	-0.06	(0.04)	0.94
English proficiency	0.20	(0.30)	1.22	0.22	(0.31)	1.25	0.20	(0.31)	1.22
Occupation									
Secondary	0.15	(0.21)	1.17	0.14	(0.22)	1.15	0.13	(0.22)	1.14
Other	-0.36	(0.56)	0.70	-0.29	(0.56)	0.75	-0.35	(0.56)	0.70
No occupation	-0.72	(0.55)	0.49	-0.71	(0.56)	0.49	-0.70	(0.56)	0.50
Discrimination	0.38	(0.21)	1.46	0.37	(0.21)	1.44	0.36	(0.21)	1.44
Family Cohesiveness	-0.13	(0.10)	0.88	-0.07	(0.11)	0.93	-0.06	(0.11)	0.94
Self-esteem				-0.20	(0.21)	0.82	-0.22	(0.21)	0.80
Money importance				0.41*	(0.19)	1.50	0.41*	(0.19)	1.50
Social support Religiosity				-0.07	(0.05)	0.93	-0.07	(0.05)	0.93
Transnational Ties									
Trips back home							0.01	(0.04)	1.01
Remittance							-0.07	(0.10)	0.93
Live in country									
Yes							0.47	(0.40)	1.61
Likelihood ratio		111.11***			119.32***			121.39***	

Standard errors are in parentheses. Omitted variables are native-born (for immigration status), female (for gender), White (for race/ethnicity), and primary (for occupation).
p < .05   **p* < .01   ***p* < .001

The conditioning factors not specific to immigrants were included in Model 5. Of the three conditioning variables included in this model, only money importance was significantly related to the odds of an arrest. Respondents who placed higher importance

on having money were 50% more likely than those who placed lower importance on having money to have an arrest ($p<.05$). Self-esteem and religiosity were not significant predictors of having an arrest ($p>.05$). This result did not support hypothesis 10. That is, conditioning factors do not mediate the effects of strain on crime, as money importance was the only conditioning factor that was related to crime. With the conditioning variables in this model, being Black was significantly associated with the likelihood of having an arrest. That is, Blacks were more likely than Whites to have an arrest (OR=8.91, $p<.05$). Also, the changes in the magnitude of the effects of race/ethnicity indicated that part of those effects on arrest was due to conditioning factors. The likelihood ratio of this model was 119.32 ($p<.001$).

Model 6 included the conditioning factors specific to immigrants, transnational ties. The results in this model showed that none of the transnational ties were significantly related to having an arrest. This means that hypothesis 11 was not supported, as transnational ties did not mediate the effects of strains on crime. After including trips back home, remittance, and living in the country of origin longer than six months the results were very similar to those in the previous model with the exception of other race/ethnic groups. The association between being a member of other race/ethnic groups and having an arrest was no longer significant ($p>.05$). Also, the results showed that male, Black, and money importance were significant predictors of having an arrest, as in the previous model. The changes in the magnitude of the effects of race/ethnicity on the likelihood of having an arrest indicated that part of those effects was due to transnational ties. The likelihood ratio of this model was 121.39 ($p<.001$).

Table 5.5 shows the results of the estimated binomial logistic regression Models (1-5) of arrest, excluding the native-born population. Model 1 included the independent variable, immigration status. In Model 2 the control variables were included in addition to immigration status. Model 3 included immigration status, control variables, immigrants' strains, and other strain. The fourth model included the conditioning factors. Model 6 included transnational ties.

Table 5.5 Results of Binomial Logistic Regression of Arrest Regressed on Independent and Conditioning Variables, Excluding the Native-born Population (N=861)[7]

	Model 1			Model 2			Model 3		
	Coef.	(S.E.)	OR	Coef.	(S.E.)	OR	Coef.	(S.E.)	OR
Immigration Status									
Long-term	0.64	(0.42)	1.90	---	---	---	0.78	(0.43)	2.18
Gender									
Male				2.22***	(0.40)	9.22	2.26***	(0.40)	9.61
Race/ethnicity									
Latino				-0.84	(0.56)	0.43	-0.85	(0.56)	0.43
Asian				-1.38*	(0.58)	0.25	-1.37*	(0.58)	0.25
Other				-0.81	(0.91)	0.44	-0.82	(0.91)	0.44
Income				-0.10	(0.06)	0.90	-0.11	(0.06)	0.90
Likelihood ratio		2.70			46.81***			50.66***	

Standard errors are in parentheses. Omitted variables are short-term (for immigration status), female (for gender), Black (for race/ethnicity), and primary (for occupation).
*$p < .05$ **$p < .01$ ***$p < .001$

The results of the logistic regression for arrest regressed on immigration status are presented in Model 1. The results showed no difference in the likelihood of having an arrest between short-term and long-term immigrants. The likelihood ratio chi-square of this model was 2.70 ($p>.05$).

Model 2 included the control variables only. The results of this model showed that among immigrants males were more likely than females to have an arrest (OR=9.22, $p<.0001$). Model 2 also showed that among immigrants Asians were 25% less likely than

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[7] Table 5.5 continued on page 109

Blacks to have an arrest (OR=0.25, $p<.05$). The likelihood ratio of this model was 46.81 ($p<.001$).

The immigration status and control variables were included in Model 3. The results of this model showed that among immigrants being male and being Asian are significant predictors of having an arrest, as shown by the previous model. The likelihood ratio of this model is 50.66 ($p<.001$).

Table 5.5 (Continued)

	Model 4			Model 5			Model 6		
	Coef.	(S.E.)	OR	Coef.	(S.E.)	OR	Coef.	(S.E.)	OR
Immigration Status									
Long-term	0.78	(0.45)	2.19	0.74	(0.45)	2.09	0.78	(0.46)	2.18
Gender									
Male	2.41***	(0.41)	11.12	2.37***	(0.42)	10.65	2.38***	(0.42)	10.81
Race/ethnicity									
Latino	-0.77	(0.58)	0.46	-0.81	(0.62)	0.45	-0.90	(0.62)	0.41
Asian	-1.41*	(0.61)	0.24	-1.55*	(0.65)	0.21	-1.72*	(0.68)	0.18
Other	-0.76	(0.93)	0.47	-0.71	(0.96)	0.49	-0.77	(0.97)	0.46
Income	-0.13*	(0.06)	0.88	-0.13*	(0.06)	0.88	-0.13*	(0.06)	0.87
English proficiency	-0.10	(0.40)	0.90	-0.07	(0.41)	0.93	-0.10	(0.41)	0.90
Occupation									
Secondary	-0.56	(0.34)	0.57	-0.58	(0.34)	0.56	-0.61	(0.34)	0.54
Other	-1.45	(1.06)	0.24	-1.47	(1.06)	0.23	-1.62	(1.08	0.20
No occupation	-0.59	(0.70)	0.56	-0.61	(0.71)	0.54	-0.66	(0.71)	0.51
Discrimination	0.67*	(0.33)	1.96	0.65	(0.34)	1.91	0.64	(0.34)	1.90
Family Cohesiveness	-0.08	(0.16)	0.93	-0.03	(0.17)	0.97	-0.02	(0.17)	1.00
Self-esteem				-0.22	(0.34)	0.80	-0.29	(0.35)	0.75
Money importance				0.52	(0.30)	1.68	0.51	(0.30)	1.66
Social support									
Religiosity				-0.05	(0.08)	0.95	-0.05	(0.08)	0.95
Transnational Ties									
Trips back home							-0.04	(0.07)	0.96
Remittance							0.00	(0.14	1.00
Live in country									
Yes							0.89	(0.58)	2.41
Likelihood ratio		60.06***			63.93***			66.03***	

Standard errors are in parentheses. Omitted variables are short-term (for immigration status), female (for gender), Black (for race/ethnicity), and primary (for occupation).
*$p < .05$ **$p < .01$ ***$p < .001$

Model 4 included immigrants' strains and a non-immigrant strain. As in the previous model, the results in this model showed that among immigrants being male and being Asian are still significant predictors of having an arrest. The odds ratio for income indicated that the likelihood of having an arrest significantly decreases as income increases among immigrants (OR=0.88, *p*<.05). Also, the results showed that among immigrants being discriminated against due to race and/or ethnicity was significantly related to having an arrest (OR=1.96, *p*<.05). This result indicated that hypothesis 9 was only partially supported since discrimination is the only strain (out of four) found to be statistically significant. The likelihood ratio of this model was 60.06 (*p*<.001).

The conditioning factors not specific to immigrants were included in Model 5. The results showed that among immigrants self-esteem, money importance, and religiosity were not significant predictors of having an arrest among immigrants (*p*>.05). This result partially supported hypothesis 10. That is, discrimination was rendered non-significant after including the non-immigrant-specific conditioning factors. The changes in the magnitude of the effects of discrimination on the likelihood of having an arrest indicated that part of those effects was due to conditioning factors. With the conditioning variables in this model, being male, being Asian, and income were significantly associated with the likelihood of having an arrest. The likelihood ratio of this model was 63.93 (*p*<.001).

Model 6 included the conditioning factors specific to immigrants, transnational ties. The results in this model showed that among immigrants none of the transnational ties were significantly related to having an arrest. Hypothesis 11 was then not supported, as transnational ties did not mediate the effects of strains on crime. The results were very

similar to those in the previous model. The results showed that, among immigrants, male, Asian, and income were significant predictors of having an arrest, as in the previous model. The likelihood ratio of this model was 66.03 ($p<.001$).

In order to assess the models' assumptions and the level of multicollinearity among predictors, variance inflation factors (VIF) were obtained. The variance inflation factors (VIF) for all six models yielded VIF values less than 10, which indicated there was no multicollinearity among the set of the various variables (Chatterjee, Hadi, and Price 2000). The highest VIF values in the first series of logistic regression models were for the dummy variables Latino (8.20) and Asian (8.21). For the second series of logistic regression models, the highest VIF values were for the dummy variables Latino (5.28) and Asian (5.63).

SUMMARY

The results for the univariate, bivariate, and multivariate analyses for crime were presented in this chapter. Analyses conducted enabled testing of the five hypotheses related to the effects of immigrants' strains on crime and of transnational ties on crime. Of those hypotheses only one was supported (hypothesis 7) by the results presented in this chapter. The results of half the models showed that short-term immigrants are less likely than the native-born to have an arrest. Although these effects were rendered non-significant by inclusion of strains and other predictors, the change in magnitude of short-term immigrants on the likelihood of having an arrest indicated that part of those effects was due to strains and other predictors. In relation to those hypotheses not supported (hypotheses 8, 9, 10, and 11), the results showed that the likelihood of having an arrest among long-term immigrants did not significantly differ when compared to the native-

born. Strains were not significant predictors of crime. Only one conditioning factor was related to crime in the sample and it did not explain the strain-crime relation as expected. The results also showed that transnational ties did not mediate the effects of strains on crime among short- and long-term immigrants.

In order to assess the effects the effects of immigrants' strains and transnational ties on crime among immigrants only, a second series of logistic regression models were conducted, which excluded the native-born population. The results of these analyses were similar to those found in the first series of models, except that discrimination was significant and it was mediated by non-immigrant conditioning factors. The findings showed that among immigrants strains (immigrants and general) and transnational ties were not related to crime involvement. Thus, hypotheses 9, and 11 were not supported either by the results of the second series of logistic regression models; and hypothesis 10 was partially supported by the results of the second series of logistic regression models.

The implications of these analyses, along with those for perceptions of immigrants as threats, are discussed in more depth in the following chapter, Chapter 6 – Discussion and Conclusion.

CHAPTER 6

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Chapter 6 provides an overview of this study. In particular, it incorporates a discussion of the results, the limitations, directions and suggestions for future research, and concluding remarks.

This study had two purposes: (1) to examine contemporary perceptions of immigrants and immigration policy views and (2) to evaluate immigrants' involvement in crime. Specifically, the study examined perceived immigrant threats and their effects on opposition to increasing the number of immigrants in the United States and support for stronger measures to exclude undocumented immigrants using Blumer's (1958) group threat theory. Negative images and contemporary perceptions of immigrants embedded in society result in the discriminatory social-political context in which immigrants find themselves.

One of the negative images and stereotypes related to immigrants is that of the "criminal immigrant." Thus, one of the foci of the study was on the effects of immigrants' strains (language barriers, occupation in the secondary labor market) and non-immigrants' strain (family cohesiveness). For crime involvement, these effects were examined using Agnew's (1992, 2001) general strain theory. Additionally, the effects of transnational ties on crime among immigrants were examined to determine if these ties were conditioning factors that can mediate the effects of strains on crime. To examine perceptions of immigrants, the 2004 GSS data were used. However, because the GSS data set did not contain measurements of transnationalism, the study utilized the CILS

data set to examine immigrants' involvement in crime and the effects of transnational ties on crime.

DISCUSSION

Overall, seven of the eleven hypotheses were supported. In general, perceived immigrant threat was associated with opposition to immigrants and support for stronger measures to exclude undocumented immigrants. The levels of opposition to immigrants are overall less among Blacks, members of other race/ethnic groups, and immigrant groups than among Whites and non-immigrants. However, levels of support for stronger measures to exclude undocumented immigrants were similar among members of other race/ethnic groups; and among immigrants and non-immigrants. In terms of immigrants and crime, immigrants were found to be not disproportionately involved in crime, as widely believed by some in the American public. Immigrants and the native-born did not differ in likelihood of arrest. Contrary to the hypothesis, however, immigrants' strains were not significant predictors of crime and transnational ties did not condition the effects of strains on crime among immigrants.

The results of contemporary perceptions of immigrants as threats confirmed previous research (Bobo and Tuan 1995; Wilson 2001) and this study's first and fourth hypotheses. As the results demonstrated, perceived threats promoted both, opposition to increasing the number of immigrants as well as support for stronger measures to exclude undocumented immigrants. Despite the fact that the United States has developed mainly through the contributions of individuals from other countries, American society in general has a long history of feeling threatened by newcomers. These threats are often reflected in the type of laws and policies created to exclude immigrant groups. For

instance, the passage of the National Origins Quota Act in 1924 was in part influenced by the perceived threat Chinese immigrants presented to the native-born during an unstable economic situation (Bloemraad 2002). American society became more accepting of immigrants during the 1960s when the socio-political context became intolerant towards excluding any groups. However, with the influx of newcomers throughout the years thereafter, anti-immigrant sentiments resurged, especially after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 (Benson and Hermsen 2004; Inda 2006; Martinez and Valenzuela 2006; Pew Research Center 2006; Rumbaut and Ewing 2007). After these incidents, stronger reforms to control immigration flow have been developed along with the restructuring of the government agency that controls immigration. These reforms and government restructuring reflect society's anxiety about immigrants, and perpetuate abstract images of immigrants as threatening and as being over-involved in crime (Mautino 2003).

Similar to the 1920s, negative images of immigrants are embedded in the current socio-political context which creates an environment where perceived threats posed by new immigrant groups thrive. The contemporary perceptions that immigrants are threatening to the crime rate, economy, political power, and nativism develop from groups' social dynamics of self-identification and conceptualization of newcomers' identities and abstract images (Blumer 1958). For example, the abstract images of the "unassimilated immigrants," "welfare dependents," "job takers," and "criminal immigrant" develop out of negative discourse and rhetoric about immigrants.

In addition to supporting the hypotheses 1 and 4, the findings also confirmed Blumer's (1958) main arguments. This study found that opposition to immigrants and

support for stronger measures to exclude undocumented immigrants were related to perceived threats that immigrants increase the crime rate, weaken economic stability, reduce the dominants' group stronghold on political power, and adversely affect American identity (nativism). The findings were consistent with the argument that the native-born population believes their national identity is being threatened by immigrants. According to Sanchez (1997), immigrants are perceived as a threat to nativism because they are not assimilating, mainly linguistically. Immigrants are perceived as being un-American and thus not worthy of receiving any American benefits. Moreover, the findings confirmed prior research examining group threat theory (Diamond 1998; Wilson 2001). Perceived immigrant threats were also influential for support for anti-immigrant policies with data collected before the September 11, 2001 attacks (Wilson 2001). Wilson found that Americans who believed that immigrants pose a threat to the economy and to national unity were more likely to oppose increasing immigration levels. Similarly, Diamond (1998) reported that Whites were more likely than Blacks to agree to reduce the number of immigrants coming to the United States.

The second hypothesis proposed in this study was that Blacks and members of other racial/ethnic groups have less opposition to immigrants than Whites. The results supported hypothesis 2, that is, Blacks and members of other racial/ethnic are less likely than Whites to oppose immigrants. The third proposed hypothesis is that immigrants have less opposition to immigrants than native-born Americans. The results also supported the hypothesis 3, that is, immigrants are less likely than non-immigrants to oppose increasing the number of immigrants.

Regarding hypothesis 5 concerning support for stronger measures to exclude immigrants, the findings did not support it. Although Blacks are less likely than Whites to support stronger measures to exclude undocumented immigrants, the findings were inconsistent for the hypotheses concerning other racial/ethnic groups. Whites and members of other racial/ethnic groups did not differ in their levels of support for stronger measures to exclude undocumented immigrants. Similarly, hypothesis 6 was not supported either. The findings showed that immigrants and the native-born population were similar in their levels of support for stronger measures to exclude undocumented immigrants. Also, the several differences in opposition to immigrants in general versus undocumented immigrants confirmed previous research that some in the American public viewed undocumented immigrants as more threatening than immigrants in general in regards to employment competition (Espenshade and Belanger 1998).

An understudied premise of group threat theory (Blumer 1958) is the idea that minority groups may sometimes view other minority groups as competition. Native-born Americans and sometimes long-term immigrants are threatened because they feel entitled to the resources, power, and prestige in society. This entitlement develops because they believe they have invested in society and newcomers have not. They oppose immigrants and support stronger measures in order to retain their privileges and prevent newcomers from encroaching upon areas they consider to be rightfully their domains (Blumer 1958). Moreover, a history of oppression and discrimination contributes to the likelihood that other minority groups would oppose immigrants and support stronger measures to exclude and control them (Bobo and Hutchings 1996). Comparing Whites with Blacks and Latinos, Bobo and Hutchings found that Blacks and Latinos were more likely than

Whites to perceive Asians as threats. Similarly, Bobo and Tuan's (1995) study supported group threat theory's premise that those who believe to be entitled to scarce resources view subordinate groups as competition and would therefore oppose policies that seem to be beneficial to the minorities.

According to Blumer (1958), minority groups perceive others as threats because minority groups define themselves as dominant *vis-à-vis* other minority groups. This study's findings indicated that a certain percentage of immigrants feel that newcomers are threats and therefore support stronger measures to exclude them. Similar arguments were made by Portes and Rumbaut (2006) and Sassen (1998), who argued that abstract images of immigrants are sometimes adopted by the non-native-born. Moreover, Portes and Rumbaut referred to the non-native-born who adopt these images as PULLAM (pull the ladder after me) because this group tends to commend their own experience in the United States but attacks those immigrants who come after them. However, the finding that only Blacks (and not members of other race/ethnic groups) were less likely than Whites to support stronger measures to exclude undocumented immigrants is not supportive of this tenet. A possible explanation is that Blacks may not perceive undocumented immigrants as threats since, as two different groups, they are not competing for the same resources found in U.S. society (Paral and Associates 2009).

Another outcome of the current study worth noting is that Democrats were less likely than Republicans to support the United States taking stronger measures to exclude undocumented immigrants. This result was not surprising as Democrats usually lean towards more inclusive policies (Burns and Gimpel 2000). The data used in this study were collected in 2004, only three years after 9/11. This means that during the time

respondents answered the GSS survey, the socio-political context in the United States was still imbued with the strong fear factor of immigrants propagated by President George W. Bush's administration. This context allowed the increase of anti-immigrant sentiments and the adoption of even more negative images of immigrants by the American public (Ceyhan and Tsoukala 2002), including that of the "criminal immigrant."

Of special interest in this study was the perceived "criminal immigrant" image because previous studies indicated that immigrants' involvement in crime was not as high as perceived by the public and was sometimes even lower than that of native-born Americans. Thus, the fourth and fifth hypotheses of this study were that short- and long-term immigrants have lower levels of crime involvement than the native-born. Overall, support for these hypotheses was mixed.

In the bivariate analyses to examine perceptions of immigrant groups as threats and in three out of the six models conducted to test hypotheses 7 and 8, the results indicated that short-term immigrants have lower levels of crime involvement when compared to the native-born, which provided some support for hypothesis 7. However, when immigrants' strains and conditioning factors were included, the percentage of short-term immigrants' involvement in crime was not significantly different from that of the native-born American. Concerning long-term immigrants, the findings did not support hypothesis 8. The percentage of long-term immigrants involved in crime did not differ from that of the native-born in any of the six models analyzed, indicating that the levels of involvement in crime among long-term immigrants were similar to that of the native born net of other factors. While the results largely did not support these hypotheses,

neither was the perceived "criminal immigrant" image supported, as immigrants were not over-involved in crime. Overall, the results showed that immigrants' involvement in crime did not differ significantly from that of the native-born population. Additionally, they confirmed previous criminological research examining immigrants' involvement in crime that showed that immigrants were not over-involved in crime relative to the native-born (Lee, Martinez, and Rosenfeld 2001; Lynch and Simon 2002; Martinez 2002; Martinez and Lee 2000; Martinez and Valenzuela 2006; Rumbaut and Ewing 2007).

Despite such empirical evidence, some in the American public continue to generalize about both documented and undocumented immigrants using abstract negative images. These images reinforce contemporary perceptions of immigrants and thus create a conflict-charged environment (Sanchez 1997). Since prejudice is directly related to perceiving immigrants as threats (Quillian 1995), anti-immigrant sentiments create a prejudicial environment in which immigrants find themselves. Moreover, the current unstable economic situation only leads to higher opposition to immigration (Esses et al. 1998). This adds another layer of conflicts and adversities that immigrants have to face during their adjustment and adaptation processes to a new country. According to general strain theory (Agnew 1992, 2001), these adversities should lead immigrants to crime involvement as a form of dealing with strain. Following Agnew's (1992, 2001) argument that strains are related to crime involvement, this study examined immigrants' and non-immigrants' strains to determine if they were predictors of crime involvement.

Immigrants enter into an American economic and class system that is already bifurcated, with the middle class almost disappearing and a large group in the upper class and lower class, appearing similar to an hourglass. Because of the lack of English

proficiency and limited job skills, immigrants tend to end up in the bottom of the hourglass where the ability to move up is almost non-existent. This situation places immigrants at a higher risk of experiencing adversities and strains due to economic deprivation, such as participation in the secondary labor market and discrimination (Waldinger 2001; Zhou 1997). Strain resulting from participation in the secondary labor market is more likely than participation in the primary labor market to lead to crime involvement (Agnew 2001). Similarly, discrimination would more likely lead to young immigrants to rebel against authority figures (Zhou 1997). Thus, the ninth proposed hypothesis of this study was that immigrants' and non-immigrants' strains lead to higher crime involvement.

Although the change in the magnitude of the effects of short-term immigrants on crime involvement indicated that was in part due to strains, the results did not support hypothesis 9. The results were largely inconsistent with Agnew's basic premise that strains are significant predictors of crime and delinquency. There were a total of four immigrants' and non-immigrant (general) strain factors included in the models (English proficiency, occupation in the secondary labor market, discrimination, and family cohesiveness) and none of them were related to crime involvement. However, the results of analyses conducted using the sample that excluded the native-born population partially supported hypothesis 9. That is, among the immigrants' strains, discrimination was a significant predictor of criminal involvement but it was rendered non-significant with the inclusion of conditioning factors. There may be reasons why English proficiency, occupation in the secondary labor market, and discrimination were not significantly related to crime.

One possible explanation for English proficiency not being a significant predictor of crime involvement may be that it is not important for certain immigrants, specifically those who live in ethnic niches. This is because English language is sometimes not a requirement to participate or move up in the labor market (Bach and Carroll-Sequin 1986), especially if immigrants reside in ethnic niches and communities, as it was the case for the sample examined in this study. Miami-Dade County is the only county in the United States in which more than 50% of the population is comprised of foreign-born individuals. Similarly, Broward County (in which the city of Ft. Lauderdale is found) is the second largest county to receive immigrants among Florida's metropolitan areas (U.S. Census 2004). Immigrant niches and communities may provide a buffer from adversities such as discrimination and crime (Bach and Carrol-Sequin 1986; Nielsen and Martinez 2006; Waldinger 2006). Nielsen and Martinez's study showed that Haitians living in a community comprised predominately of Haitians have overall lower levels of violence despite experiencing multiple adversities. Additionally, the lack of relationship between occupation in the secondary labor market and crime may be due to immigrants' dual-framework of reference. Immigrants are usually "pushed" out of their countries due to hardships (Cervantes, Salgado de Snyder, and Padilla 1989) and thus occupation in the secondary labor market in the United States may not be a cause of strain for them, especially when compared to the situation in their home country.

In terms of family cohesiveness, the non-immigrant-specific strain, Agnew (2001) explained that strain may result from strong social controls such as stern parental supervision. This may have been the case in the sample used in this study. Although the type of stress resulting from high social control is less likely to lead to crime as an

adaptation to strain (Agnew 2001), there are a small percentage of individuals who may find high social control strenuous enough to do so. Overall, the findings for the effects of strains on crime did not support Agnew's general strain theory. Similarly, the findings related to the conditioning factors did not lend support for the theory either.

Strains do not necessarily lead to criminal coping, partly due to certain conditioning factors (Agnew 1992, 2001). Based on this argument, it was hypothesized that conditioning factors such as self-esteem, money importance, and religiosity mediated the effects of strain on crime. Self-esteem was used to reflect an individual coping resource that can influence the choice of coping strategies when dealing with strain. Individuals who place much importance on their goals and values are more likely to resort to crime when coping with strain; thus, money importance was used to reflect this conditioning factor. Religiosity was used to reflect conventional social support. According to Agnew (2001), conventional social support offers ties that help alleviate stressful events. Overall, the findings were mixed and largely did not support the hypothesis 10.

After including the conditioning factors, the results indicated that only one of the three conditioning factors, namely, placing high importance on having lots of money, was associated with criminal involvement. This result confirmed general strain theory's premise that money importance is related to criminal involvement. On the other hand, self-esteem and religiosity were not found to be related to criminal involvement as it was hypothesized. Similarly, the results of the logistic regression models conducted with the immigrant sample showed that none of these conditioning factors were significant predictors of crime involvement. However, the inclusion of these factors rendered

discrimination non-significant, which indicated that conditioning factors mediated the effects of discrimination on crime. This result supported general strain theory's tenet that conditioning factors mediate the effects of strains on crime.

Contrary to the proposed argument in this study, self-esteem may be influential in the sense that people may resort to crime in order to rebuild the levels of high self-esteem that were lost when experiencing strain (Baron 2004). In terms of religiosity, it has been argued that the effects of religion on crime may vary by denomination (Evans, Cullen, Dunaway, and Burton 1995). This is a religion differentiation not considered in this study. Another possible explanation for these two factors not being related to crime may be due to the strains themselves. Contrary to the hypothesized relationship between strain and crime, the strains examined in this study were not strong enough to be significant predictors of crime and thus the effects of conditioning factors were not possible to gauge.

In addition to the aforementioned conditioning factors, this study proposed that immigrants' involvement in transnational activities, a social dynamic specific to them, protects them against crime because it could be defined as a form conventional social support. Thus, hypothesis 11 stated that transnational ties, as a source of conventional social support for immigrants, mediate the effects of strains on crime among immigrants even while holding constant other conditioning factors. The findings from the analyses conducted with the general sample and the immigrant-only sample did not support this last hypothesis. Transnational ties were not related to crime nor did they account for the (non-existent) strain-crime relationship.

This study introduced the argument of the effects of transnational ties on crime among immigrants. Further examination of these unexpected null results may garner more insight into these relationships and their effects on immigration and crime. Previous research showed that criminal activities, in particular gang activity, are being exported back to and from the country of origin (Smith 2006). For example, Smith argued that exportation of gang activity into Mexico is due to U.S.-born youths living unsupervised by adults for long terms in Mexico, which creates "a gang world that is local but transnational" (p. 211). Also, having to send remittances back home could have opposite effects on immigrants (than as hypothesized). For instance, instead of feeling that sending money back home is an important commitment to family, which bonds immigrants to family in the home country, as argued in this study, it could be that for some immigrants sending money is strenuous and strain inducing, especially if they are unemployed or earning low wages. However, respondents were not asked about their feelings in relation to transnational activities.

LIMITATIONS

Both data sets used presented some issues that limit the generalizability of this study. Thus, interpretation of findings should be done with caution. The GSS, including the ISSP module, and the CILS are self-reports; therefore, it is possible that respondents did not provide accurate responses (validity) or that responses were recorded inaccurately. Respondents have high potential for answering incorrectly when having to answer sensitive questions such as those about arrests.

A second general issue concerning these two data sets is the missing observations, which could have caused some bias in the results. Listwise deletion was used to handle

missing data. This creates no bias when data are missing at completely at random (Allison 1998), although that was not entirely the case for both data sets. As the missing data analyses showed, a few respondents' characteristics were associated with the likelihood of having missing data. As such, results from both sets of analyses should be interpreted cautiously.

In addition to these general issues with both data sets, each also present some more specific obstacles. The GSS is a cross-sectional data set and thus causal ordering can not be determined. The first hypothesis in this study was that perceived threats lead to opposition of immigrants and immigration. Nevertheless, there is a chance that the order could be reversed. For instance, perceptions of immigrants as threats could result from implementation of stronger measures to control and exclude immigrants. The CILS is a longitudinal survey that presented problems with attrition. As noted earlier in the data and methods chapter, the third wave of the survey only returned about a 50% response rate.

The second limitation presented by the data sets is related to measurements of certain demographic data and concepts. In the GSS, the number of respondents who reported being Asian or Latinos was small. Therefore, these two groups were collapsed with those who marked "other" when asked about their race/ethnic classification. This limited the ability to make inferences about differences or similarities found among these groups. The small number of respondents who were members of these two ethnic categories could have been a result of the GSS requiring respondents to be proficient in English. Regardless of the causes, the re-categorization of race/ethnic groups in this study (White, Black, and Others) limited the examination of opposition to immigration by ethnicity and the ability to categorize the immigrant population by ethnicity. Moreover,

the variable measuring immigration status only categorized respondents as being born-in or not being born in the United States and therefore did not allow the differentiation between long- and short-term immigrants but only between immigrants and non-immigrants. Another issue related to this variable was that the small number of immigrants (n=97) in the GSS data could have also caused some lack of power in the results.

The variables in the CILS were not optimal to measure the different concepts of general strain theory, especially since the CILS was not mainly created to test the efficacy of this theory. For instance, the CILS oversampled immigrants which by default resulted in the number of Whites and Blacks being small and not representative of the population. Also, measuring criminal involvement with arrest may not be appropriate because the sensitivity of the questions could have led to underreporting and because the type of crime can not be differentiated. The arrest could have been related to petty crimes such as stealing gum or more serious crimes such as murder. Additionally, many people commit crime and are never arrested. Therefore, strains, conditioning factors, and coping mechanisms were not operationalized in fashions consistently in line with Agnew's definitions of these concepts. More specifically, in this study I was not able to operationalized immigrants' characteristics that may affect perceptions and sensitivity to strain, such as immigrants' resiliency.

General strain theory includes many strain factors that lead to crime, factors that affect perceptions and sensitivity to strain, and factors that condition the effects of strains on crime (Agnew 1992, 2001). The last limitation of this study was related to the general strain theory. As with many sociological and criminological theories, general strain

theory is mainly based on the U.S. population and it does not consider immigrants and their specific socio-cultural characteristics. Therefore, the study's arguments that were based on this theory may not follow the same logic as the arguments made when examining the strain-crime relationship among the U.S. population. Based on the limitations, the results of this study, and findings of previous research, there are several directions for future research.

DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

There are several directions that can be followed in reference to examining perceptions of immigrants as threats and immigrants' involvement in crime. Bobo and Hutchings (1996) suggested that Blumer's group threat theory (1958) should be extended to examine Blacks' perceptions of threats presented by other minority groups. Their suggestion was based on the idea that Blacks, as the group that has been historically most oppressed, would be more likely to view other minority groups as threatening. Following the same line of thought, the theory could be extended to examine long-term immigrants' perceptions of short-term immigrants as threats.

Long-term immigrants who are already more established in American society may feel entitled to resources found in the United States and thus perceive short-term immigrants as threatening (Blumer 1958). Moreover, long-term immigrants compared to short-term immigrants may have been victims of oppression from the dominant group. Therefore, long-term immigrants may be likely to perceive short-term immigrants as threats. Another valuable measurement should be that of different ethnic groups and not only racial groups for the native-born and immigrants. These two measurements would enable categorization of immigrants by ethnic group. The categorization permits

differentiation of levels of perceptions of immigrants as threats not only by immigration status but also by immigrant racial/ethnic group. Unfortunately, the GSS data used in this study did not provide the opportunity to differentiate immigrants' length of time in the United States or to categorize them by racial and ethnic group.

This study largely supported group threat theory and, as noted earlier in the study, previous findings have supported it as well. However, previous findings are more consistent with the theory when examining threats perceived by Whites but when examining minority groups' perceptions of other minority groups, the findings have been mixed. Therefore, future research examining group threat theory and perceptions of immigrants as threats will benefit from more comprehensive and representative data that could emerge as the immigrant population grows in the United States.

In terms of examining immigration, transnationalism, and crime using strain theory, there are several suggestions. Further scrutiny of the operationalization of transnational activities is warranted because, as previous research suggested, transnational activities could also be defined with less tangible activities such as emailing and keeping abreast of news from the home country (Aranda, Sabogal, and Hughes, forthcoming). Additionally, communication with close relations in the home country has been found to have positive effects on immigrants' well-being (Aranda and Vaquera, forthcoming). Another possible significant transnational activity to examine is immigrants' participation in non-governmental groups whose main purpose is to aid the home country. Moreover, following general strain theory, transnational ties as social support may have stronger effects if the individuals involved in such transnational exchanges have intimate personal relationships with people in the home country.

Therefore, more specific measurements that provide information about the individuals involved in these activities are recommended. For example, in addition to asking respondents whether they send remittances, a question about the recipient could be included (e.g., "Is he/she a family member?").

Although transnational ties were not related to crime, transnational activities in general should still be considered in future research as a micro-level factor when examining immigrants' involvement in crime because they are specific to immigrant groups (Kivisto 2001; Levitt and Glick-Schiller 2004; Portes 1999). In the CILS sample the percentage of those involved in transnational behaviors varied by the type of activities: 62% of immigrant respondents have traveled back at least once to their home country, 34% have sent money back home, and 6% have gone back to their home country and lived there for more than six months. As shown by these percentages, transnational activities are not uncommon among immigrants, although some are more practiced than others.

Immigrants' strains should also be considered because, as with transnational activities, they are social factors specific to immigrant groups. Additionally, tests of the efficacy of general strain theory (Agnew 1992, 2001) in the context of immigrant population are encouraged, even though this study did not find strong overall support for it. In terms of immigrant populations, an additional variable measuring resilience would be valuable. Resilience is another factor that is being examined in relation to immigrants that alleviates the difficulties of the immigration and adaptation processes and it may have implications for the strain-crime relationship (Portes and Rumbaut 2006; Rumbaut 2000).

Botchkovar, Tittle, and Antonaccio (2009) suggested that the effects of strain may vary according to social context. To further extend this line of thought, it could be argued that it is not only the social context where immigrants find themselves but also the influence of the context in which immigrants belonged to (their home country context). Immigrants tend to come from social, political, and historical contexts where hardships such as political turmoil are not uncommon (Cervantes, Salgado de Snyder, and Padilla 1989). The adversities encountered in the country of origin may condition immigrants into having high levels of resilience and thus making them less sensitive to the strains they may face as immigrants within the U.S. socio-political context (Portes and Rumbaut 2006; Rumbaut 2000). Moreover, Riolli, Savicki, and Cepani (2006) found that resilience was related to higher optimism among Albanian immigrants living in the United States (one of the different groups they examined). Agnew (2001) indicated that strains are subjective and sensitivity to them depends in part on various conditioning factors, including individual coping resources such as self-esteem. When designing a new study to test general strain theory, measures of optimism and resilience should be included so they can be assessed as possible individual coping resources that condition the effects of strain on crime. Overall, given that (adult) immigrants' socialization processes took place within a different cultural context, their sensitivity to strains in general and ability to handle such strains in a non-criminal fashion should explicitly be included in future research (Botchkovar et al.).

Since the foundations of general strain theory are based on American culture, new theorizing may have to occur in order to incorporate the growing immigrant population in the United States and their past social, political, and historical contexts and experiences.

Thus, a cross-cultural sample and the inclusion of variables that can measure what immigrants bring from their past context (such as resilience) may provide more support for this theory. It will also enable the expansion of the theory to more fully understand crime among immigrants. Unfortunately, there was no measure of resilience in the data set used in this study.

As with previous studies examining the efficacy of general strain theory, the results of this study were mixed and not fully confirmatory (Baron 2004; Mazerolle and Maahs 2000). General strain theory presents a challenge because it conceptualizes many factors that can influence crime. Studies examining the efficacy of this approach need to be carefully crafted to include most of the strains likely to lead to crime as well as most of the conditioning factors. Most importantly, when testing general strain theory, including a measure of anger would be important because previous research has consistently found that crime and delinquency resulted from anger (Brezina 1996; Baron 2004). Additionally, more attention to the methodology is encouraged when testing the theory's efficacy with immigrant populations. If the correct data set is found or developed, this study is worth duplicating with additional and more precise measurements of the theory's concepts.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

This study included an examination of Americans' perceptions of immigrant groups and their effects on immigrant acceptance. It was demonstrated that perceiving immigrants as burdensome to the American economy, as gaining political power, as diminishing the American identity, and as contributors to crime led to opposition to immigrants and to support for the U.S. government to take stronger measures to exclude

immigrants. The high levels of opposition to increasing the number of immigrants and supporting stronger measures to exclude immigrants are indications that American society is not ready to fully embrace immigrants. Among the contemporary perceptions of immigrants as threats, one focus of this study was on the perception of immigrants as a threat to increasing the crime rate. Thus, immigrants' involvement in crime was examined. It was argued that the image of the "criminal immigrant" is a stereotype derived from immigrants entering illegally but, as with other stereotypes, it is generalized to all other newcomers (documented immigrants, refugees, asylees, entrants, parolees, etc.). This study showed that, contrary to the criminal immigrant stereotype, the percentage of immigrants involved in crime is no different from that of the native-born despite immigrant-specific and general crime-inducing strains.

Despite previous research, the American public still believes that immigrants increase the crime rate, as described in this study. In order to debunk the myth of immigrants' over-involvement in crime, especially embedded in the post 9/11 socio-political context, research using both criminological and immigration concepts is encouraged in order to advance an integrated theoretical understanding of immigrant crime. This research and other similar studies are important because they contribute to the bodies of literature and knowledge that influences positive social and political changes for immigrants in the United States.

Contemporary negative perceptions are detrimental to immigrants and non-immigrants as well. For immigrants, negative perceptions exclude them from mainstream society resulting in more adversities, such as discrimination, that may lead them to believe that newcomers arriving after them are to be feared and treated as a threat

(Blumer 1958; Bobo and Hutchings 1996). For non-immigrants and immigrants alike, negative perceptions allow them to develop a racist discourse that does not sound racist, which can provide them with the social space to unconsciously discriminate against a group without acknowledging that the reason behind it is race or ethnicity (Aranda, Chang, and Sabogal 2009). Additionally, as shown in this study, perceptions and abstract images lead to opposition to immigrants and support for stronger reforms to exclude them. These reforms reinforce and allow the perpetuation of abstract images and the discourse that immigrants are threats to the safety and security of the United States.

Positive changes related to immigrants in the current socio-political context may be a challenge since economic uncertainties bring more opposition to immigration (Burns and Gimpel 2000; Wilson 2001). With the current economic instability in the United States, the crime rate is likely to increase. Thus, the perpetuation of the "criminal immigrant" image may abound, and it should be of no surprise that coverage of violent crimes by the mass media may focus on the immigration status of the perpetrators. Minority groups are usually overrepresented in the mass media, especially when violent crimes are reported. That is, when perpetrators of violent crimes are members of minority groups, the media is more likely to broadcast the incidents than when perpetrators are White (Dixon and Linz 2000). A recent and unfortunate incident can be used as an example of this argument. On April 4, 2009 in Binghamton, NY, a man shot and killed 13 people. The initial news to appear on the media as the situation was unfolding highlighted the fact that the shooting took place in an *Immigration* center, although the name of the location is "American Civic Association." The second focus of the story was not on the victims; instead it was on the ethnic and immigration background of the shooter. It was

specifically reported that he was an immigrant from a country in the Asian continent who became a naturalized U.S. citizen over 20 years ago but did not know how to speak English well. The other side of the story as told by the media was that the perpetrator was angry in part because others would make fun of his accent when speaking English. It was also discovered that he had lost his job. Taking into consideration that this was just one case, it is still worth noting that anger and strains may have been related to this crime taking place and that the anger may have resulted from his experiences of being made fun of. While a causal relationship can not be established in this case, it illustrates that it is important to attempt to decrease discrimination and prejudice in American society because of the many negative consequences they may bring.

Patterns of intergroup relations in the United States started in the exclusionary end of the continuum with the attempt to destroy Native Americans and to transfer them in massive numbers to reservations. The continuum of intergroup relations has slowly moved towards more inclusive patterns. For example, it was almost 150 years ago that slavery was abolished, almost 80 years ago that women were allowed to vote, and over one hundred days ago that a Black man was inaugurated into the presidency. American society has experienced innumerable social changes and with each change more groups gain greater inclusiveness. However, these social changes came about as a result of movements and sometimes political violence urging for new and more inclusive policies. In the last decade, pro-immigrant groups have taken to the street to demonstrate their discontent with the mistreatment of immigrants (Aranda, Chang, and Sabogal 2009). Consequently, some educational and awareness efforts have been accomplished to reduce negative perceptions of immigrants, including the "criminal immigrant" image.

Currently, with President Obama in office, there are indications that immigration reforms seem to lean towards being more inclusive and the immigrant discourse less negative. For example, the Senate Judiciary Committee's Subcommittee on Immigration, Border Security and Citizenship held a hearing on April 30th, 2009 titled "Comprehensive Immigration Reform in 2009: Can We Do It and How?" One of the issues discussed was the moral imperative in immigration reform (Immigration Policy Center 2009). Nevertheless, time will tell if these policies can be legislated and American stereotypes of immigrants as threatening and criminal will change.

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Rosenberg's Self-Esteem Scale

1. I am a person of equal worth to others
    1   agree a lot
    2   agree a little
    3   disagree a little
    4   disagree a lot

2. I have a number of good qualities
    1   agree a lot
    2   agree a little
    3   disagree a little
    4   disagree a lot

3. I feel I am a failure
    1   agree a lot
    2   agree a little
    3   disagree a little
    4   disagree a lot

4. I do things as well as most others
    1   agree a lot
    2   agree a little
    3   disagree a little
    4   disagree a lot

5. I do not have much to be proud of
    1   agree a lot
    2   agree a little
    3   disagree a little
    4   disagree a lot

6. I take a positive attitude toward myself
    1   agree a lot
    2   agree a little
    3   disagree a little
    4   disagree a lot

7. I am satisfied with myself
    1   agree a lot
    2   agree a little
    3   disagree a little
    4   disagree a lot

8. I wish I had more respect for myself
     1   agree a lot
     2   agree a little
     3   disagree a little
     4   disagree a lot

9. I certainly feel useless at times
     1   agree a lot
     2   agree a little
     3   disagree a little
     4   disagree a lot

10. At times I think I am no good at all
     1   agree a lot
     2   agree a little
     3   disagree a little
     4   disagree a lot

VITA

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