Perpetuating the Marginalization of Latinos: A Collateral Consequence of the Incorporation of Immigration Law into the Criminal Justice System

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Perpetuating the Marginalization of Latinos: A Collateral Consequence of the Incorporation of Immigration Law into the Criminal Justice System

YOLANDA VÁZQUEZ*

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ABSTRACT

Latinos currently represent the largest minority in the United States. In 2009, we witnessed the first Latina appointment to the United States Supreme Court. Despite these events, Latinos continue to endure racial discrimination and social marginalization in the United States. The inability of Latinos to gain political acceptance and legitimacy in the United States can be attributed to the social construct of Latinos as threats to national security and the cause of criminal activity.

Exploiting this pretense, American government, society and nationalists are able to legitimize the subordination and social marginalization of Latinos, specifically Mexicans and Central Americans, much to the detriment of the Latino community. This poisonous social construct has many manifestations—it depicts the Latino as a foreigner, a criminal, an “illegal” and it characterizes the Latino as one who comes to this country to cause social chaos by refusing to follow our country’s
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laws, work with authority, or enter with right. These depictions and characterizations instill fear and contempt against the Latino and motivate the creation of harsh immigration laws and enforcement measures. Ironically, these depictions and characterizations are then used as the pretext for legal actions against the Latino community. Currently, the primary vehicle for accomplishing this disguised discrimination has been the incorporation of immigration law into the criminal justice system.

Under the pretext of addressing criminal activity and national security concerns, American law-makers and society use immigration and criminal law to preserve racial inequality and perpetuate the marginalization of Latinos living in the United States. Thus far, these measures have been effective in depriving Latinos of the right to live in this country with rights equal to the majority, and denying them the freedom and privilege of living in the United States without abuse, discrimination, or fear.

This Article will discuss the use of the criminal justice system as the current primary means to stigmatize, punish and remove Latinos, the fallacy of the justifications put forth for this discrimination, and the impact of this governmental course of action on the Latino community. This Article concludes that until the Latino identity is disaggregated from the criminal and immigration contexts, discrimination against all Latinos will persist in a state-sanctioned, society approved and formidable form.

INTRODUCTION

Immigration and criminal law have increasingly become intertwined.¹ During the last fifteen years, the number of immigrants deported due to criminal convictions has increased dramatically. For instance, in 2004, 202,842 individuals were removed from the United States, 88,897 of which were removed for a criminal conviction.² In contrast, in 2009, 393,000 noncitizens were removed from the United States.

¹. The term “crimmigration” has been coined to express this convergence. See Padilla v. Kentucky, 130 S. Ct. 1473, 1481-82 (2010) (acknowledging the entanglement of immigration and criminal law in the context of deportation); Daniel Kanstroom, Deportation, Social Control, and Punishment: Some Thoughts About Why Hard Laws Make Bad Cases, 113 HARV. L. REV. 1889, 1890-91 (2000) (stating that immigration “laws have brought about a rather complete convergence between the criminal justice and deportation systems”).

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States, over 128,000 of which were removed as a result of a criminal conviction.\(^3\)

Several systemic changes have spurred this increase in removals based on criminal convictions, including: (1) a decrease in the number of remedies available to immigrants convicted of crimes in immigration court, and (2) an increase in the number of criminal convictions that have become removable offenses.\(^4\)

Simultaneously, the criminal justice system has been harnessed to amplify the effects of these immigration law changes, with immigration law increasingly being enforced through the use of the criminal justice system. The criminal justice system has become the primary means to locate, remove, and permanently banish immigrants from the United States. Currently, enforcement, detention, and removal of immigrants pervade every aspect of the criminal justice system. In mass workplace raids, immigrants are criminally prosecuted before they are transferred into the custody of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (“ICE”).\(^5\) ICE is regularly present in local jails.\(^6\) Probation, the government, local law enforcement, and courts across the country are taking it into their own hands to call ICE on defendants that appear before them.\(^7\) Section 287(g) Memorandums of Agreement\(^8\) and Secure Communities\(^9\) give local law enforcement the power


\(^4\) See Padilla, 130 S. Ct. at 1478 (“The landscape of federal immigration law has changed dramatically over the last [ninety] years. While once there was only a narrow class of deportable offenses and judges wielded broad discretionary authority to prevent deportation, immigration reforms over time have expanded the class of deportable offenses and limited the authority of judges to alleviate the harsh consequences of deportation. The “drastic measure” of deportation or removal is now virtually inevitable for a vast number of noncitizens convicted of crimes.”); see generally Susan L. Pilcher, Justice Without a Blindfold: Criminal Proceedings and the Alien Defendant, 50 Ark. L. Rev. 269 (1997).


\(^6\) See Fact Sheet: Delegation of Immigration Authority Section 287(g) Immigration and Nationality Act, U.S. Immigration & Customs Enforcement, http://www.ice.gov/newslibrary/factsheets/287g.htm (last visited Mar. 19, 2011) [hereinafter Fact Sheet] (“Currently ICE has 287(g) agreements with [sixty-nine] law enforcement agencies in [twenty-four] states. Since January 2006, the 287(g) program is credited with identifying more than 200,300 potentially removable aliens—mostly at local jails.”).

\(^7\) This writer has systematically witnessed and been involved in cases where probation, courts, prosecution, and government workers have called ICE on noncitizens that have appeared before them.

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to notify ICE for any immigrant who is processed for state, local, or federal crimes. Immigrants in the court system are being denied bail based on immigration status.\textsuperscript{10} Prosecutions are strategically set to ensure that immigrants are prosecuted to secure their deportation and permanent removal from the United States.\textsuperscript{11}

Latinos\textsuperscript{12} currently represent the largest minority in the United States.\textsuperscript{13} Latinos simultaneously represent the largest immigrant group population. As the overall number of immigrants of color has drastically increased since the 1970s, Latino immigrants have accounted for the largest proportion of that increase.\textsuperscript{14} Unfortunately, the number of Latinos removed from the United States has also dramatically increased. Latinos presently represent over 94\% of the total number of noncitizens removed.\textsuperscript{15} Even more unfortunate, Latinos currently constitute 94\% of the number of noncitizens removed from the United States based on criminal convictions.\textsuperscript{16} This implores an examination of whether any connection between Latino immigration and crime exists beyond the increased conjoining of criminal and immigration law to remove Latino immigrants. If not, and as this Article argues, then we might inverse the inquiry and ask if the conjoining of criminal law and immigration law is proper in light of its disparate impact on the Latino community.


\textsuperscript{10} ARIZ. CONST. art. 2, § 22(A)(4) (imposing no bail for defendants accused of a serious felony offense if defendant has “entered or remained in the United States illegally and if the proof is evident or the presumption great as to the present charge”).


\textsuperscript{12} I use the word “Latino” to identify persons of Mexican, Central and South American, Dominican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, and Spanish descent. However, the terms “Latino” and “Hispanic” are used interchangeably throughout this document based upon others’ use of the terms to describe the same group of individuals.


\textsuperscript{14} See IAN HANEY LÓPEZ, WHITE BY LAW: THE LEGAL CONSTRUCTION OF RACE 144 nn.5-6 (2006) (discussing the greatest source of demographic change currently to be “the burgeoning Hispanic population”).

\textsuperscript{15} 2009 ANNUAL REPORT, supra note 3, at 4.

\textsuperscript{16} Id. at 4 tbl.3.
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A particular rhetoric has motivated the convergence of immigration and criminal law and insulated the resulting systematic oppression from criticism. The criminal enforcement measures used in the criminal justice system to locate, detain, and remove immigrants are popularly justified by reference to concerns about national security, protecting communities, and criminal behavior.17 These justifications have been too easily accepted; government officials and politicians have been allowed to create, pass, and enforce laws that would be given greater scrutiny if allegations of protection and security to our country and its citizens were not used.

The harmful effects of this crimmigration disaster are disproportionately being borne by the Latino community—most acutely by Latino immigrants, their families, and the communities to which they belong. Equally concerning, though more insidious, is the overarching impact of this fiasco on all Latinos living in the United States. As a direct consequence of the criminal justice system being used to enforce immigration law, Latinos as a group are being viewed as criminals, “illegals,” individuals incapable of social assimilation, and instigators of social chaos.

This Article discusses the use of the criminal justice system to enforce immigration laws and its consequences on Latinos living in the United States. Part I of this Article summarizes the historical exclusion and marginalization of Latinos in the United States. Part II of this Article illustrates the incorporation of immigration law into the criminal justice system by providing an overview of criminality-related immigration law changes and criminality-related immigration enforcement programs. Part III of this Article demonstrates that a disconnect between immigration control and “dangerous” crime and terrorism discredits the rhetoric used to enact and sustain these crimmigration measures. Part IV of this Article discusses the harmful effects that crimmigration has had on the Latino population and identity in this country. Finally, this Article concludes that crimmigration has become the modern day apparatus for extending a historical and shameful history of Latino exclusion, discrimination, and marginalization in this country. Further, until the Latino identity is disaggregated from notions of crime, terror, and “illegal” immigration, all Latinos will

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continue to be deprived of the opportunity for fair and just treatment in the United States.

I. HISTORY OF THE EXCLUSION OF LATINOS IN THE UNITED STATES

United States immigration law has consistently worked to prevent Latinos, especially indigent Latinos, from migrating or remaining in this country. Likewise, Latinos who have been able to migrate to the United States have historically been treated very poorly. In this way, immigration law has absorbed and reflected this country’s desire to maintain and uphold a “white” national identity, even at the cost of marginalizing Latinos as well as other immigrants of color.

As a result of ideas of white superiority, Latinos have struggled to obtain full membership and benefits of citizenship in United States history. From the beginning of United States’ history, Latinos have been deemed “unwelcome.” Further, like African Americans, Latinos have been seen as inferior to whites.

As early as the late 1800s, when white Americans began to have contact with Mexicans in the Southwest, Mexicans were viewed as worthy of discrimination and characterized negatively. Early accounts described Mexicans as “earless and heartless creatures”, “semi-

18. See Bill Ong Hing, Defining America Through Immigration Policy 115-54 (2004) (discussing how Mexicans have historically been treated in the United States in order to prevent migration and social equality).


20. See Kevin R. Johnson, Fear of an “Alien Nation”: Race, Immigration, and Immigrants, 7 STAN. L. & POL’Y REV. 111, 113-16 (1995) (discussing opposition to current immigration laws on the basis of race and a need for homogeneity); see also George A. Martínez, Immigration: Deportation and the Pseudo-Science of Unassimilable Peoples, 61 SMU L. REV. 7, 10-13 (2010) (arguing the popular fear that immigrants constitute a major threat to national identity has led to harsh immigration practices); see, e.g., Peter Brimelow, Alien Nation: Common Sense About America’s Immigration Disaster (1995) (providing a nativist perspective on immigration control, viewed by many as racist).

21. Morín, supra note 19; see Hing, supra, note 18, at 133 (discussing how Mexicans have come to be defined as Non-Americans); see also Reginald Horstman, Race and Manifest Destiny: The Origins of American Racial Anglo-Saxonism 208-48 (1981) (describing historical subordination of Mexicans).


23. Morín, supra note 19, at 51-52.
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barbarians”, who were “only interested in satisfying their animal wants.”24 A traveler on the Texas-Santa Fe expedition stated that “[t]here are no people . . . more miserable in condition or despicable in morals than the mongrel race inhabiting New Mexico.”25 Mexicans were also labeled “lazy, ignorant, and, of course, vicious and dishonest.”26

This initial view of Mexicans held by Anglo-Saxon Americans laid the foundation for a discriminatory disposition by the United States “majority” toward Latinos that continues today.27 The persistence of this disposition is apparent from various episodes of this country’s history. Although many examples exist that demonstrate the perpetual discriminatory treatment and exclusion of Latinos in the United States, the following examples are used because of their blatant anti-Latino justifications and their particularly marginalizing consequences for Latinos in this country.

A. Denial of the Full Benefits of Citizenship

Since at least the mid-1800s, full citizenship rights have been denied to Latino populations.28 After the Mexican-American War, Mexico lost approximately 55% of its territory as well as thousands of its nationals that were living in those areas at the time.29 The Mexican nationals gained United States citizenship in the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848.30 However, whether or not a Mexican national could actually enjoy the full benefits of citizenship was ultimately left to the individual states during that time.31

24. Horsman, supra note 21, at 211 (citing nn. 6, 7).
25. Id. (citing Foreigners in Their Native Land: Historical Roots of the Mexican Americans 72 (David J. Weber ed. 1973)).
26. Id. at 212 (citing Waddy Thompson, Recollections of Mexico 6, 23, 187, 239 (1847)).
27. The Latino identity encompasses a diverse group of individuals from different countries. The historical experiences of the diverse groups involved would be too numerous to include in this Article. Because Mexicans represent the largest Latino population in the United States and their historical experience and treatment has affected the treatment of the majority of Latinos living in the United States, I will use their experiences to demonstrate the marginalization of all Latinos.
28. Morin, supra note 19 at 51-56.
30. Id. at art. IX.
31. Juan F. Perea, Richard Delgado, Angela P. Harris & Stephanie M. Wildman, Race and Races: Cases and Resources for a Diverse America 265-70 (2000) (stating that Mexicans were generally considered an inferior race unless they could show they were “white” instead of from indigenous ancestry).
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State laws determined whether or not a Mexican individual could enjoy the full benefits of citizenship, such as voting, maintaining property rights, or holding political office in the jurisdiction where he lived in the United States. Under United States law, only “free white persons” could be United States citizens. Therefore, despite the Treaty of Hidalgo, whether or not a Mexican national could be a citizen of an individual state or enjoy the full benefits of citizenship in most instances focused on the state government’s assessment of whether a Mexican could be classified as white. The wording used by the state laws exemplified this differential treatment. For example, California extended voting rights to white male citizens of the United States and “every white male citizen of Mexico, who elected to be a United States citizen under the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo . . .”

The determination of whether or not a Mexican was “white” under the law turned on Anglo-American perceptions of the race of particular Mexicans. Generally, Mexicans could only be citizens if they descended from white countries. Therefore, Mexicans of white descent were viewed as being entitled to white status and, therefore, granted citizenship. However, Mexicans who descended from Indian, Black, or a “mixed” race were not granted citizenship or the rights that were enjoyed with that status. This determination was typically one of perception—how the Mexican looked. If the Mexican did not appear or could not pass as being white, he was denied equal status to Anglo-Americans citizens.

32. See, e.g., People v. De La Guerra, 40 Cal. 311 (1870).
33. Naturalization Act of 1790; see generally Immigration Law: An Overview, LEGAL INFO. INST, CORNELL U. L. SCH., http://topics.law.cornell.edu/wex/immigration (last visited Mar. 23, 2011) (“This Act restricted naturalization to ‘free white persons’ of ‘good moral character’ and required the applicant to have lived in the country for two years prior to becoming naturalized.”).
35. CA. CONST. art. II, § 1 (1849) (emphasis added), reprinted in CASES AND MATERIALS, supra note 34, at 21-22.
38. Menchaca, supra note 36, at 587-89.
39. E.g., CA. CONST. art. II § 1 (1849); see also id. at 589.
40. Menchaca, supra note 36, at 587-89.
41. Id.; see DE GENOVA & RAMOS-ZAYAS, supra note 37.
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B. Denial of Entry into the United States as a Legal Immigrant

Prior to 1965, citizens from countries in the Western Hemisphere were not subject to the national origin quota system. Latinos, however, were systematically denied legal entry. The enforcement of laws on the books such as the head tax, visa fee, literacy requirement, and various types of medical examinations were strictly enforced so that many Latinos from the Southern Border were forced to enter the country without authorization.

Traditionally, Mexicans have been used in the United States for unskilled labor. The denial of legal entry coupled with a lack of border enforcement allowed the United States to satisfy their desire for temporary Mexican labor. "Permitting" illegal entry was an effective way to ensure that Mexicans would not permanently remain in the United States because it helped to ensure that they did not achieve legal status. Therefore, Mexican immigrants were "allowed" into the United States in an undocumented status as a method to ensure that their stay in the country could only be temporary.

Additionally, when Latinos were allowed into the United States legally, such as during the Bracero Program, their status in the United States was still temporary. The Bracero Program allowed Latino immigrants to work in the United States but did not allow Bracero work-
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ers to bring their families with them during their stay.49 This approach further entrenched the idea that Latino immigrants could be tolerated for their labor, but would not be welcome as permanent members of American society.

C. Lynching

Another example of the contempt that Anglo-Saxon Americans felt towards Latinos is the prevalence of lynching incidents in the United States between 1848 and 1928. While historically left out of United States’ history books, the lynching of Latinos, mainly Mexicans, occurred in the Southwest at the same time that Blacks were being lynched in the South.50 During this time, it is estimated that 597 Latinos were lynched in the Southwest.51

Lynching of Latinos in the Southwest occurred as a method to maintain racial hierarchy and social control as well as a way to gain economic resources.52 Anglo-Saxon Americans believed that Mexicans, like Blacks, were inferior and less than human—deeming Mexicans, therefore, unworthy of humane treatment.53

Latinos were lynched or murdered for many of the same reasons that the lynching and murdering of Blacks was prevalent in the South. Mexicans were lynched for allegations of being “uppity,” making advances towards white women, cheating at cards, and refusing to leave land that whites wanted.54 However, Latinos were also lynched for being “too Mexican,” speaking Spanish loudly or displaying their

49. See Leo R. Chavez, Immigration Reform and Nativism: The Nationalist Response to the Transnationalist Challenge, in IMMIGRANTS OUT! THE NEW NATIVISM AND THE ANTI-IMMIGRANT IMPULSE IN THE UNITED STATES 61, 72 (Juan F. Perea ed., 1997) (“The Commission’s advocacy of single male workers allowed to work on a temporary basis—without their families accompanying them—was institutionalized in contract labor programs during the 1910s and later during the Bracero Program, which lasted from 1942 to 1964.”).
51. Id. at 299 (citing William D. Carrigan & Clive Webb, The Lynching of Persons of Mexican Origin or Descent in the United States, 1848 to 1928, 37 J. SOC. HIST. 411, 413 (2003)).
54. Id. at 418-22.; Carrigan & Webb, A Dangerous Experiment, supra note 52, at 271.
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“Mexicanness” too proudly for the comfort of Anglo society.\textsuperscript{55} Mexican women were lynched for rebuffing the advances of white men.\textsuperscript{56}

In addition to the lynchings, lands were taken and property was confiscated throughout the region.\textsuperscript{57} Anglo-Saxon Americans reasoned that Mexicans were uncivilized due to their inferiority and, therefore, incapable of properly caring for their property.\textsuperscript{58} Rationalizing that their treatment of Mexicans was justified by Mexican inferiority, Anglo-Saxon Americans seized Mexicans’ land and property.

D. The Bisbee Deportation of 1917

Although most deportations purport to target undocumented immigration, the Bisbee deportation\textsuperscript{59} illustrates how many instances of mass deportation have actually stemmed from a refusal by Anglo-Saxon Americans to view Latinos as equals and a desire to maintain a status quo of inequality.

In 1917, a mass deportation of mine workers occurred in Bisbee, Arizona. The impetus for this deportation can be traced to a history of discriminatory treatment of foreign and Mexican, both citizen and noncitizen, workers in the city. As of 1881, more than half of Bisbee’s residents were foreign born.\textsuperscript{60} Despite this, mine workers in the city were treated differently based on race, citizenship, and the belief in Anglo-American superiority.\textsuperscript{61} For example, compensation was directly correlated to one’s race and/or citizenship status. White miners received the highest pay, followed by “foreign” workers, and Mexican workers received the least.\textsuperscript{62}

By 1917, Mexican and “foreign” workers began to demand better wages and treatment. In response, Anglo-Saxon Americans attempted to enact anti-immigrant and anti-Mexican labor barriers such as the Alien Labor Act, which would have required that four out of five employees in any workplace be native-born or naturalized Americans.

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{55} Carrigan & Webb, Mexican Origin, supra note 53, at 420.
\item \textsuperscript{56} Ken Gonzales-Day, Lynching in the West: 1850-1935 (2006).
\item \textsuperscript{57} Carrigan & Webb, A Dangerous Experiment, supra note 52, at 271.
\item \textsuperscript{58} Horsman, supra note 21, at 210.
\item \textsuperscript{59} Katherine Benton-Cohen, Borderline Americans: Racial Division and Labor War in the Arizona Borderlands 198-238 (2009) (supplying a historical account of the Bisbee Deportation).
\item \textsuperscript{60} Id. at 81.
\item \textsuperscript{61} Id. at 199 (stating that the events that occurred in Bisbee in 1917 were shaped by historical assumptions concerning the rights and responsibilities of “white manhood”).
\item \textsuperscript{62} Id. at 101 (stating that in 1898, white miners earned $3.50 a day, “foreign” workers earned $2.00 per day, and Mexicans earned $1.50 per day).
\end{itemize}
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Another proposal would have required 80 percent of workers “in underground or other hazardous occupations” to be English-speaking.\(^{63}\) On or around June 27, 1817, tensions between White, foreign and Mexican workers came to a peak and a mine worker strike began.

During the two week strike, the town was crippled.\(^{64}\) The turmoil culminated on July 12, 1917, when a mass deportation of “undesirables” occurred in Bisbee, Arizona.\(^{65}\) Two thousand vigilantes of Bisbee as well as local law enforcement rounded up and arrested two thousand people, the majority Mexican and Mexican Americans.\(^{66}\) Approximately thirteen hundred mine workers were forcibly deported from Bisbee, Arizona to Columbus, New Mexico in cattle cars without food or water for the twelve hour trip and left there without money or transportation.\(^{67}\)

There was no contradiction that the strike was peaceful.\(^{68}\) However, the deportation of the strikers was justified as being a measure of security for the city and being in defense of American citizens. Many argued the deportation was necessary to defend against enemy aliens, agitators, non-Americans, and those incapable of patriotism.\(^{69}\) In reality, meeting the demands of the workers would have meant racial equality and the end of racial hierarchy in Bisbee’s miner camp.\(^{70}\)

E. Mexican Repatriation

October 29, 1929, referred to as Black Tuesday, for many marks the day when the Great Depression hit the world with the U.S. stock market crash.\(^{71}\) The ensuing Great Depression marked a time of severe economic depression in the United States and around the world.\(^{72}\) During this time, unemployment in the United States rose to

\(^{63}\) Id. at 201 (noting that both bills were defeated).


\(^{65}\) Id.

\(^{66}\) BENTON-COHEN, supra note 59, at 208 nn.25-28.

\(^{67}\) See Vernon H. Jensen, Heritage of Conflict, Labor Relations in Nonferrous Metals Industry up to 1930, at 405-06 (1950).

\(^{68}\) BENTON-COHEN, supra note 59, at 212 (stating that one U.S. Marshall described it as the most peaceful and orderly strike he had ever seen).

\(^{69}\) Id. at 220-21; see Christopher Capozzola, Uncle Sam Wants You: World War I and the Making of the Modern American Citizen 128–30 (2008).

\(^{70}\) Id. at 211 (“For white workers and managers to admit the equal manhood of Mexican workers would be to topple the teetering racial hierarchy of the white man’s camp.”).

\(^{71}\) Hoffman, supra note 43, at 33.

\(^{72}\) Id.
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approximately 25%.73 Joblessness affected both the rich and the poor, and many saw the economic disaster as a condition of the economy that would not end.74

This economic crisis resulted in the persecution of those perceived to be Mexican immigrants.75 Although the alleged motive behind the actions taken during the time span of 1929-1939 was to remove all unauthorized immigrants, no other racial or ethnic group was subjected to the harsh treatment that the Mexican community endured.76 Indeed the mass deportation of immigrants during this period was later named the Mexican Repatriation.77 Violence and scare tactics were used to push Mexicans out of the United States, and mass deportations through roundups and repatriation drives abounded.78

During the Mexican Repatriation period, it is estimated that approximately one million individuals of Mexican descent were forcibly removed from the United States and sent to Mexico.79 Across the United States, entire neighborhoods disappeared as the Mexican occupants were forced from their homes.80 Although the rhetoric focused on the use of Mexican Repatriation as a method to target unauthorized immigration and open up jobs for the employment of United States citizens, thousands of those forcibly removed from the United States to Mexico were United States citizens.81

F. Operation Wetback

Another government program that targeted Latinos was Operation Wetback. Operation Wetback occurred in 1954 and was a method used to enforce the deportation of undocumented Mexican

74. Id.
75. See generally FRANCISCO E. BALDERRAMA & RAYMOND RODRIGUEZ, DECADE OF BETRAYAL: MEXICAN REPATRIATION IN THE 1930s (2006) (describing the injustice and discrimination that the Mexican community experienced in 1930s America).
76. HOFFMAN, supra note 43, at 33; BALDERRAMA & RODRIGUEZ, supra note 75, at 147.
78. BALDERRAMA & RODRIGUEZ, supra note 75, at 1.
79. Id. at 3, 9.
80. Id. at 2.
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laborers.82 However, as with the Mexican Repatriation, the net was cast much wider.83

The then Commissioner of U.S. Immigration and Nationalization Service, General Joseph Swing, coordinated with state and local officials and local law enforcement to locate and deport “illegal” Mexican immigrants.84 The name of the program made obvious its targets, given that “wetback” is a derogatory term used for individuals from Mexico. True to its name, Operation Wetback targeted Mexican nationals.85 Police enforcement focused predominately on Latino neighborhoods in the Southwestern states.86 Regardless of where police enforcement occurred, officers looked for “Mexican-looking” individuals and asked those individuals for identification of their immigration status.87 Fear of violence, unemployment and the potential militarization of their neighborhoods and homes caused many Mexicans to flee regardless of their immigration or citizenship status.88

Approximately 3.7 million Mexicans were deported during Operation Wetback.89 As with Mexican Repatriation, United States citizens of Mexican descent as well Mexican nationals were forcibly removed from the United States.90 While many recognized Operation Wetback as a xenophobic and discriminatory act against Mexicans, many applauded the program.91 Those individuals and organizations stated that Operation Wetback helped to eradicate the presence of “illegal” aliens in United States, who damaged the health of the American people, displaced American workers, and harmed American retailers. Further they argued that the open-border policy of the American government posed a threat to the security of the United States.92

83. Carrasco, supra note 81, at 197.
85. Hino, supra note 18, at 133; Garcia, supra note 82, at 172.
86. Garcia, supra note 82, at 183.
87. Id. at 143.
88. Id.
89. Carrasco, supra note 81, at 197.
90. Id.
92. Id.
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G. Chandler Roundup

In a more recent historical episode of Latino discrimination and social exclusion, police officers in cooperation with Border Patrol agents targeted individuals in Chandler, Arizona whom enforcement suspected of being “illegal” immigrants. During the five days that police and federal officers engaged in this program, also referred to as “Operation Restoration,” police officers and Border agents walked through town asking anyone they suspected of being “illegal” to prove citizenship. In their search for “illegal” immigrants, local police and federal agents targeted anyone who was suspected of being Mexican. As a result, many United States citizens and legal residents were stopped because they spoke Spanish or looked Mexican. Mayor Boyd Dunn acknowledged that officers did engage in racial profiling, and the city settled a lawsuit against them as a result of their behavior.

II. THE INTERTWINED RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN IMMIGRATION LAW AND THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

During the last thirty years, immigration law has become increasingly intertwined with the criminal justice system. This phenomenon has resulted from a rhetoric that immigrants have increasingly been responsible for crime and terror that is occurring within our borders. This Part will overview the creation and expansion of the “criminal alien” through immigration reforms in the last three decades, the corresponding increased use of criminal enforcement measures to target this “criminal alien,” and the resulting increase in “criminal alien” expulsions.

93. See generally Mary Romero & Marwah Serag, Violation of Latino Civil Rights Resulting from INS and Local Police’s Use of Race, Culture and Class Profiling: The Case of the Chandler Roundup in Arizona, 52 CLEV. ST. L. REV. 75 (2005) (discussing urban policy and practice in constructing citizenship).
96. Gorman, supra note 94.
97. Id.
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A. Immigration Reform and the Expansion of the “Criminal Alien”

Immigration reforms since the late 1980s have increased the number of removals based upon immigration consequences of a criminal conviction, expanding the category of the “criminal alien.” They have done so in two ways: (1) by increasing the number of criminal convictions that have become removable offenses, and (2) by decreasing the number of relief remedies available to immigrants who have been convicted of crimes in immigration court. Currently, immigration law has made noncitizens increasingly more likely to be convicted of a crime that will result in deportation and has restricted the ability of immigration courts to prevent this removal.

Prior to the late 1980s, the exclusion and removal of immigrants was more limited and immigration enforcement officials had broad discretion in their decision to admit and remove noncitizens convicted of crimes.98 However, beginning in the late 1980s, the climate towards immigrants began to change and subsequent immigration reform legislation began to reflect an increasing desire to remove noncitizens from the United States.99 Much of the immigration legislation enacted after the late 1980s increased the number of noncitizens removable based on criminal activity by increasing the amount of crimes that made noncitizens subject to immigration consequences, either by lowering the sentence required to trigger removability or by adding certain conduct to the list of already established removable offenses.100 For example, in 1988, Congress passed the Anti-Drug Abuse Act (“ADAA”).101 Under the ADAA, the category “aggravated felony” was first introduced, which at that time included three crimes: murder,


99. 533 U.S. at 294-96; Vázquez, supra note 98, at 44-46.

100. Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act (“IIRIRA”) of 1996, Pub. L. No. 104-208, § 304(b), 110 Stat 3009-546, 3009-597 (1996) (codified at 8 U.S.C. § 1101(a) (LexisNexis 2006 & Supp. 2011)). For example, a conviction under INA § 101(a)(43)(D), prior to IIRIRA, could only be considered an aggravated felony if the amount of the funds exceeded $100,000. A conviction under INA §101(a)(43)(M) could only be considered an aggravated felony if the loss to the victim exceeded $200,000. After IIRIRA, the loss to the victim in each section was lowered to $10,000 for the conviction to be considered an aggravated felony. In addition, INA § 101(a)(43)(F), (G), (N), and (P), changed from “is at least [five] years” and replaced by “at least one year,” thereby, decreasing the sentence of a conviction to qualify for deportation under each section.

drug trafficking, and illegal trafficking in firearms or explosive devices.102 Currently, however, there are twenty-one categories in the INA that enumerate crimes that qualify as aggravated felonies.103 While the term “aggravated felony” gives the perception that those who are convicted in this category are dangerous criminals, crimes that would be defined under this category often are neither “aggravated” nor a “felony.”104 The aggravated felony category, with its expansion, now includes: a “theft offense (including receipt of stolen property) or burglary offense . . . for which the term of imprisonment [is] at least one year,”105 as well as “an offense relating to a failure to appear before a court pursuant to a court order to answer to or dispose of a charge of a felony for which a sentence of [two] years’ imprisonment or more may be imposed.”106

Later, legislative acts continued this trend of labeling noncitizens as “criminal aliens,” and subjecting noncitizens to deportation for criminal convictions. The Immigration and Nationality Act of 1990 (“The Act”) and the Immigration and Nationality Technical Corrections Act of 1994 (“INTCA”) both increased the number of crimes that became removable offenses while curtailing the remedies available to those noncitizens convicted of crimes to prevent removal.107 As a result of these measures, many noncitizens became ineligible to stay in the United States as they no longer were eligible for immigration relief such as asylum, voluntary departure, registry, naturalization, withholding, or suspension of deportation.108

Then in 1996, Congress passed the Antiterrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act of 1996 (“AEDPA”) and the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigration Responsibility Act of 1996 (“IIRIRA”).109 As two of the most sweeping immigration acts in history, they further

102. Id.
105. INA § 101(a)(45)(G).
106. Id. § 101(a)(43)(T).
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increased the number of crimes that became removable offenses and severely limited the relief available to noncitizens.\textsuperscript{110} The acts increased the number of noncitizens who could be classified as aggravated felons, increased the number of crimes that made a person removable, severely restricted judicial review of administrative removal orders, limited remedies for relief from deportation, limited ability for admission into the United States by aggravated felons, and limited the discretionary relief from deportation available by the Attorney General.\textsuperscript{111} One specific example of AEDPA and IIRIRA’s effects was the repeal of INA §212(c) relief from deportation.\textsuperscript{112} Prior to 1996, more than half of the applications under § 212(c) received relief from deportation in immigration court.\textsuperscript{113}

B. The Use of the Criminal Justice System to Assist in Locating and Expelling the “Criminal Alien”

While reforms in immigration law have broadened the category of removable “criminal aliens” and decreased their ability to remain in this country through the criminal court system, enforcement of immigration law through the criminal justice system has also assisted in the intertwined relationship of immigration and criminal law that currently exists as well as the increase in the number of noncitizens removed.

The Department of Homeland Security (“DHS”) implemented the Agreement of Cooperation in Communities to Enhance Safety and Security (“ACCESS”). ACCESS houses a series of programs that depend on state and local cooperation with federal agents to enforce federal immigration law, including the 287(g) Memorandum of Understanding program and Secure Communities program.\textsuperscript{114} Under these programs, local and state police officers are used to enforce immigration law for purposes of locating and deporting “dangerous” criminals in order to maintain our national security and keep the country’s neighborhoods safe.\textsuperscript{115} ACCESS is operated by ICE.\textsuperscript{116}

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{110} See IIRIRA § 304(b); AEDPA § 440(d).
\item \textsuperscript{111} Id.
\item \textsuperscript{112} I.N.S. v. St. Cyr., 533 U.S. 289, 296 n.5 (2001).
\item \textsuperscript{113} Id.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
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While there are many programs that have been implemented, 287(g), Secure Communities as well as Operation Streamline, a program the prioritizes the federal prosecution of immigration violations, are more recent examples of how the criminal justice system currently is used to enforce immigration law in the United States.

1. 287(g) Memorandum of Understanding

One aspect of the enactment of IIRIRA was its addition of section 287(g) to the INA.117 This amendment to the INA allowed for state services to carry out immigration enforcement under agreement with the federal government.118 It was enacted as a mechanism to assist federal immigration officers in locating and removing noncitizens who pose a threat to national security and public safety.119 Under 287(g) Memorandum of Understanding agreements, local law enforcement are permitted to perform immigration functions concerning identification, processing, and detention of immigrants.120 This includes the ability for local authority to arrest and transfer immigrants, to investigate immigration violations, to collect evidence, and to assemble an immigration case for prosecution or removal.121

Although 287(g) agreements were previously available, it was not until after the September 11, 2001 attacks when they began to be used.122 Currently, ICE has agreements with seventy-one law en-
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enforcement agencies in twenty-five states.123 Since January 2006, ICE states that the programs are “credited with identifying more than 200,300 potentially removable aliens—mostly at local jails.”124

2. Secure Communities

Another program used by ICE to locate and remove immigrants is the Secure Communities program.125 Secure Communities establishes the use of biometrics to share information on everyone who is booked into law enforcement custody between the FBI, DHS, and local law enforcement. By DHS’s own mission statement, Secure Communities was created “to identify, detain and remove from the United States aliens who have been convicted of a serious criminal offense and are subject to removal.”126 The program has also described its targets as “high-threat” criminal immigrants.127 Currently, eleven hundred jurisdictions in forty states are part of Secure Communities.128 ICE plans for all jurisdictions to participate in Secure Communities by 2013.129 Between October 2008 and February 28, 2011, over sixty thousand noncitizens were identified and removed through Secure Communities.130

123. See Fact Sheet, supra note 6.
124. Id.
126. CTR. FOR CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS, BRIEFING GUIDE TO “SECURE COMMUNITIES”—ICE’S CONTROVERSIAL IMMIGRATION ENFORCEMENT PROGRAM NEW STATISTICS AND INFORMATION REVEAL DISTURBING TRENDS AND LEAVE CRUCIAL QUESTIONS UNANSWERED, available at http://www.cardozo.yu.edu/uploadedfiles/CardozoProfiles/immigrationlaw_741/NDLON_FOIA_Briefing%20guide.Final.pdf (last visited Mar. 19, 2011) [hereinafter BRIEFING GUIDE]; MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT BETWEEN U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY IMMIGRATION AND CUSTOMS ENFORCEMENT AND STATE IDENTIFICATION BUREAU 1, [hereinafter MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT] available at http://www.ice.gov/doclib/foia/secure_communities/securecommunitiesmoatemplate.pdf; see generally NAT’L IMMIGRATION LAW CTR., DHS’S “SECURE COMMUNITIES”: NO RULES OF THE ROAD (2011), available at www.nilc.org/immlawpolicy/LocalLaw/scomm-no-rules-of-road-2011-03-04.pdf (last visited Mar. 19, 2011) (discussing how “[a]lthough the program purportedly targets ‘criminal aliens’ who have been convicted of serious offenses, secure communities applies to immigrants regardless of guilt or innocence, how or why they were arrested, and whether their arrests were based on racial or ethnic profiling or were just a pretext for checking immigration status”).
127. See MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT, supra note 126, at 1.
128. NILC SECURE COMMUNITIES, supra note 126, at 3.
130. BRIEFING GUIDE, supra note 126, at 2, n.7 (citing Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Secure Communities State Identification Deployment Briefing, New York State, June 17, 2009, ICE FOIA 10-267-000800).
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3. Operation Streamline

In recent years, federal prosecutors have focused on prosecuting federal immigration violations. These recently high numbers of federal prosecutions can be attributed to Operation Streamline. Operation Streamline focuses on arresting, prosecuting and removing undocumented immigrants for immigration violations. The program was developed by the Bush Administration in 2005. It has been described as a means to deter unlawful immigration from the Southern Border through mandatory federal prosecution of all immigration violations, including unlawful entry and unlawful reentry. Prior to Operation Streamline, most apprehended undocumented immigrants were subject only to civil process and possible penalties.

C. Increasing Expulsion of the “Criminal Alien”

The programs above and the immigration reforms of the last thirty years have led to an increase in the total number of individuals removed from the United States as well as the total number of individuals actually removed based upon criminal convictions. For instance, in 1988, the United States removed 25,829 noncitizens, 5,956 of which were removed based on their criminal or narcotics violations, approximately 23.1% of the total removals. In 1996, just ten years later, the United States removed 68,657, with 36,909 noncitizens removed for criminal convictions, accounting for 53.8% of the total re...

131. See TRANSACTION RECORDS ACCESS CLEARGINGHOUSE, SURGE IN IMMIGRATION PROSECUTIONS CONTINUES (2008), available at http://trac.syr.edu/immigration/reports/188/ (highlighting a surge in immigration-related prosecutions from the previous year).

132. JOANNA LYDGATE, THE CHIEF JUSTICE EARL WARREN INST. ON RACE, ETHNICITY & DIVERSITY, ASSEMBLY-LINE JUSTICE: A REVIEW OF OPERATION STREAMLINE 1 (2010); see also KOU LIS, supra note 11, at 44-47.


134. KOU LIS, supra note 11, at 44.

135. Id.

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removals. In 2004, the number rose to 202,842 noncitizens removed, 88,897 of which were removed for a criminal conviction. Most recently, in 2009, 393,000 total persons were removed from the United States. Of the 393,000 noncitizens removed, approximately 128,000 were removed as a result of a criminal conviction.

III. DISCONNECT BETWEEN IMMIGRANTS, ENFORCEMENT AND “DANGEROUS” CRIME

As this Part will discuss, ICE’s local enforcement programs and increased federal prosecutions of immigration violations under Operation Streamline have done little to locate and remove serious criminals who pose a threat to national security or public safety. In fact, these programs have done little more than to remove noncitizens guilty of drug crimes and traffic offenses.

Nevertheless, the rhetoric used to justify these programs has solidified the belief that immigrants cause more crime and threaten our nation and community. It is now a commonplace belief that noncitizens, especially Latinos, are removed from the United States because they are “dangerous criminals” who threaten the national security and public safety.

A. 287(g) MOAs Fail to Target Dangerous Crimes or Terrorism

ICE maintains as part of their reasoning for 287(g) agreements that:

Terrorism and criminal activity are most effectively combated through a multi-agency/multi-authority approach . . . State and local law enforcement officers play a critical role in protecting our homeland because they are often the first responders on the scene when there is an incident or attack against the United States. During the course of daily duties, they will often encounter foreign-born criminals and immigration violators who pose a threat to national security or public safety.

It also states,

The cross designation between ICE and state and local patrol officers, detectives, investigations and correctional officers allows

137. Id.
138. See supra note 2.
139. 2009 ANNUAL REPORT, supra note 3.
140. Id. at 4 tbl.4.
141. See Fact Sheet, supra note 6.
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these local and state officers necessary resources and latitude to pursue investigations relating to violent crimes, human smuggling, gang/organized crime activity, sexual-related offenses, narcotics smugglings and money laundering.\footnote{Id.}

Based on ICE’s promotion, dangerous crime was, and is, a top priority for this program. However, when looking at the data for the specific types of crimes that noncitizens apprehended had committed, the actual information confirms that noncitizens deported under these agreements, are not the dangerous criminal felons and terrorists that American society believes them to be. Instead, they are typically those who have the misfortune of “driving while brown,” since many detained under this program were charged with minor traffic offenses were Latinos.

For example, in 2008, North Carolina placed three thousand noncitizens in removal proceedings as a result of their 287(g) agreements.\footnote{Martin Rosenbluth, Southern Coalition for Social Justice, 287(g) and Other ICE ACCESS Programs in 2008, at 2, [hereinafter NCSA Presentation] available at http://www.southerncoalition.org/documents/287g_and_ICE_Access.pdf.} However, of the three thousand noncitizens placed in removal, 23% were charged with a DWI and 33% were charged with violations of motor vehicle laws other than DWI, such as driving without a license.\footnote{Id.} The information was the same in Montgomery County, Maryland.\footnote{Jeremy Hauck & Sebastian Montes, Casa de Maryland Sues Frederick County Sheriff’s Office, Gazette.net, Nov. 25, 2009, available at http://www.gazette.net/stories/11252008/frednew181637_32489.shtml.} Out of the 221 noncitizens arrested, 117 were originally charged with driving without a license and twenty-four others were charged with other traffic offenses.\footnote{Id.} In Cobb County, Georgia and Frederick County, Maryland, approximately 80% of the individuals they have detained through 287(g) were individuals who committed Level 3 offenses, which are defined as crimes punishable by less than one year, or traffic offenses.\footnote{Randy Capps et al., Migration Policy Inst., Delegation and Divergence: A Study of 287(g) State and Local Immigration Enforcement 2 (2010), available at http://www.migrationpolicy.org/pubs1287-divergence.pdf.}

The unequal levels of crime enforcement under 287(g) and the impact on Latinos is most drastically seen in Alabama. In Alabama, it was revealed that 58% of motorist stopped by a specific police officer based upon 287(g) were Latinos, although Latinos make up less than

\footnote{Id.}

\footnote{Martin Rosenbluth, Southern Coalition for Social Justice, 287(g) and Other ICE ACCESS Programs in 2008, at 2, [hereinafter NCSA Presentation] available at http://www.southerncoalition.org/documents/287g_and_ICE_Access.pdf.}

\footnote{Jeremy Hauck & Sebastian Montes, Casa de Maryland Sues Frederick County Sheriff’s Office, Gazette.net, Nov. 25, 2009, available at http://www.gazette.net/stories/11252008/frednew181637_32489.shtml.}

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2% of Alabama’s population.148 When asked about his ability to make immigration enforcement decisions, the officer stated, “I may be able to take out a terrorist before he does something else to us.”149 There were no records to verify that any of the Latino immigrants that were stopped by this police officer had any connection to terrorism.

In spite of the rhetoric that the program is used to combat threats to public safety and national security, jurisdictions’ statistics vary significantly.150 Still, it is estimated that only 50% of the noncitizens apprehended have been defined as convicted of serious crime.151 Therefore, although the 287(g) program may have been intended to target noncitizens who pose a risk to national security and public safety, there is currently little connection between acts of terrorism or serious crime and the immigrants who are being apprehended under the 287(g) agreements.

B. Secure Communities Fails to Target Dangerous Criminals

In looking at the statistics on the type of offenses for which noncitizens are being put into the criminal justice system through Secure Communities, we again see the lack of nexus between dangerous crime and immigrants removed.

In 2009, 22% of individuals transferred into ICE custody through Secure Communities were non-criminals.152 In 2010, the number had risen to at least 32%.153 When one includes the numbers of both non-criminals or those who were picked up for low level offenses, such as traffic offenses or petty juvenile mischief, the numbers rise to 79% since the program’s inception.154

In Maricopa County, Arizona, home to Sheriff Joe Arpaio, ICE categorizes more than half (54%) of people deported through Secure Communities as non-criminals. Not surprising, the vast majority, if not all, have been Latinos.155

149. Id.
150. Capps et al., supra note 147, at 2.
151. Id.
153. Id.
154. Id.
155. Id. at 3.

2011]
C. Operation Streamline Fails to Target Dangerous Criminals

What has arisen from Operation Streamline's “zero-tolerance” attitude has been an increase in the prosecution of nonviolent immigration crimes while at the same time a decrease in the number of prosecutions for federal weapons, drugs, smuggling, organized crime, corruption, and “white collar” crimes.  

Prior to the implementation of Operation Streamline, federal prosecutions of immigration violations were normally used for individuals with previous criminal records. Today, the majority of federal prosecutions are against those apprehended attempting to cross the border for the first time, many with no prior criminal history or offense for entering the United States. Currently, 54% of all federal prosecutions are for immigration violations, the majority have been against Mexican and Central American immigrants. 

While DHS continues to state that Operation Streamline has been a success, many disagree. Most attribute any decline in the number of immigrants arrested at the border for unlawful entry to several other factors: the decline in the economy, the increased costs of immigration, the increased use of professional smugglers, and false documents. 

In defense of the implementation of Operation Streamline, ICE states that they put a high priority on “illegal” immigration, which includes targeting illegal aliens with criminal records who pose a threat to public safety. However, as the statistics show, most prosecuted under Operation Streamline have done no more than attempt to cross the border for the first time without authorization and have no prior criminal record.

157. Lydgate, supra note 132, at 1.
158. Id. at 3.
159. New Data on Federal Court Prosecutions, supra note 156.
160. Lydgate, supra note 132, at 10.
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D. Drug Offenses, Traffic Offenses, and Immigration Violations
Constitute the Majority of Immigration Removals Based
Upon Criminal Conduct from the United States

In 2009, the three actual leading causes of immigrants being re-
moved from the United States based upon what DHS categorized as
criminal convictions were for drug crimes, traffic offenses, and im-
migration related violations. These three categories accounted for 61%
of all noncitizens removed that year.162 Drug crimes, although catego-
rized as “Dangerous Drugs” crimes in DHS’s Annual Report, in-
cluded simple possession as well as manufacturing of any drug
deemed to be illegal.163 Traffic offenses, the second largest criminal
removal category, were not defined at all.164 The third highest cate-
gory of removal, immigration violations, included unlawful entry, re-
entry, false claims to citizenship, as well as alien smuggling. No
statistics were available for the percentages of each crime that made
up each removable criminal category.

As for crimes that might truly be considered violent or danger-
ous, such as terrorism, murder or sexual assault, none appear to be a
leading or even considerable cause of removal. Sexual assault of-
fenses accounted for only 2.2% of the total number of immigrants re-
moved for criminal violations. Terrorism and murder did not appear
anywhere on the list of leading causes.165

IV. CRIMMIGRATION’S PRESENT-DAY
IMPACT ON LATINOS

While the enmeshment of immigration law into the criminal jus-
tice system has failed to address or reduce dangerous or terrorist
crime, it has had an incredibly detrimental impact on the Latino com-
community.166 In this way, crimmigration has become the current mecha-
nism used to extend the longstanding subordination and
marginalization of Latinos in the United States that was discussed in
Part I of this Article. Unfortunately, discussion of this harmful impact

162. 2009 ANNUAL REPORT, supra note 3, at 4 tbl.4.
163. Id.
164. Id. It is worth noting that 2009 was the first year that the DHS Annual Enforecement
Report listed traffic offenses. This is surprising since the category managed to be the second
leading type of crime that caused a noncitizen to be removed, but not surprising in light of
statistical outcomes for 287(g) and Secure Communities programs.
165. Id.
166. See JOHNSON, supra note 22, at 30 (“With race remaining central to modern immigration
enforcement, persons of Mexican ancestry have experienced its detrimental impacts.”).
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has been obscured by society’s focus on the social construct of the
dangerous “criminal alien” who threatens national security and public
safety.167

This section aims to discuss the impact that crimmigration has
had on Latinos. The impact is not only on the noncitizen Latinos who
face removal but on their family, friends, and the community in which
they live.

A. The Number of Latinos Removed from the United States

Latinos currently represent the largest minority in the United
States, representing approximately 15.8% of the total United States
population.168 Latinos also reflect the largest group of immigrants liv-
ing in the United States, approximately 53.1%.169

The staggering number of individuals removed from the United
States each year, including for criminal violations, most greatly affects
Latinos. The majority of noncitizens being removed are from five
Latin American countries: Mexico, El Salvador, Honduras, Guate-
mala, and the Dominican Republic.170 In fact, in fiscal year 2009, La-
tinos accounted for approximately 94% of the total number of
removals as well as the total number of noncitizens removed for crimi-
nal violations.171 Further, in the criminal justice system, over 80% of
the individuals prosecuted are poor.172 Therefore, the largest group of
individuals affected by removal from the United States based on crim-
inal convictions is poor Latino immigrants.

B. Impact of Crimmigration Removals on Latino Individuals

In a 1945 decision Justice Murphy stated that “[t]he impact of
deportation upon the life of an alien is often as great if not greater
than the imposition of a criminal sentence. A deported alien may lose

167. Id. at 121-23 (“Often overlooked in the study of ‘criminal aliens’ is the impact of racially
skewed U.S. law enforcement on the deportation of immigrants.”).
168. U.S. C ENSUS B UREAU, S TATE & C OUNTY Q UICK F ACTS (Nov. 4, 2010), http://quick
facts.census.gov/qfd/states/00000.html (The data is “derived from Population Estimates, Census
of Population and Housing, Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates, State and County Hous-
ing Unit Estimates, County Business Patterns, Nonemployer Statistics, Economic Census, Sur-
vey of Business Owners, Building Permits, Consolidated Federal Funds Report.”).
171. See id. at 4 tbl.3.
172. S TEVEN K. S MITH & C AROL J. D EFRANCES, OFFICE OF  JUSTICE PROGRAMS, BUREAU
OF JUSTICE STATISTICS, INDIGENT DEFENSE 1 (1996), available at http://bjs.ojp.usdoj.gov/content/
pub/pdf/id.pdf.
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his family, his friends, and his livelihood forever. Return to his native land may result in poverty, persecution, and even death.”173 Sixty-six years later, his statement remains true.

The detrimental impact of removal is acutely born by Latino individuals who are at risk of being removed or have been removed.174 The immigration consequences of criminal convictions affect an individual’s immigration status, his or her ability to naturalize, and his or her ability to remain in the United States with family and friends. Many individuals that have been removed had been in the United States for many years.175 Once removed, they are forced to go to a country that they do not know and where they are without family or friends.176 They may not know the culture, speak the language of that country and may not be able to obtain employment.177 The citizens of the country they return to may find them “foreign” and treat them differently.178

The ability of a deportee to work or earn a living is difficult in countries that are already struggling with issues of poverty and unemployment.179 Since many that are deported are poor, they arrive to their country with only the clothes on their back. Lawful permanent residents who are removed lose all Social Security benefits they had

174. I am focusing on the detrimental impact experienced by removed Latino immigrants, but Latino Americans also are affected by increased criminalization. For example, Latino Americans face increased racial profiling by law enforcement. One in ten Latino adults in the United States reported that they had been asked by police or other authorities about their immigration status in 2009. LACAYO, supra note 122, at 2 (discussing the 2009 Pew Hispanic Center survey of Latinos).
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earned while working in the United States. 180 Many deportees have few opportunities for employment. 181

C. Impact of Crimmigration Removals on Latino Families

Removal affects not only the individual removed, but also the families they leave behind. It is estimated that nearly 10% of families with children in the United States live in a “mixed status” household. 182 Mixed status is defined as a family that has both citizen and noncitizen members. 183 From 1996 to 2007, it is estimated that 1.6 million families in the United States were separated in some form by removals. 184 Involuntary and unexpected removal of a family member has particularly severe and long-lasting effects on the socioeconomic status and emotional well-being of a family. 185

Financially, removal severely diminishes the resources available to the remaining U.S. household. 186 The removed family member, in many instances the primary wage earner in the family. When his or her income is terminated by removal, many families left in the United States risk homelessness because they are unable to pay rent or mortgage payments. 187 Affected families often must seek the help of relatives, friends, outside organizations or public assistance programs for basic necessities such as shelter, clothing, and food. 188

180. 42 U.S.C. § 402(n) (2006) (discussing an immigrant’s inability to collect Social Security benefits if he is removed from the United States and the conditions by which his noncitizen or U.S. citizen family members may be able to receive benefits).


183. Id.

184. Id.


186. Id. at 1819-20. Removal also affects any family members in the country of origin who were dependent on remittances regularly sent from the removed person. Id.


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The emotional suffering of the family is also significant.\textsuperscript{189} Although the removal is physical, the loss of a family member can have long-lasting and traumatic emotional effects.\textsuperscript{190} The emotional suffering caused by removal of family members has been most studied in regards to its effect on children.

Approximately five million children living in the United States are cared for by undocumented immigrant parents and three million of these children are U.S. citizens.\textsuperscript{191} Between 1998 and 2007, more than one hundred thousand parents of United States citizen children were removed.\textsuperscript{192} It is estimated that for every two undocumented workers detained by ICE, one child is left without a caretaker.\textsuperscript{193} However, the actual statistics may be higher since many detained parents do not provide any information regarding their children, or may provide misleading or incomplete information about them, for fear that government authorities may apprehend their children as well as other family members.\textsuperscript{194} In recent years, an increasing number of women have been detained and removed from the United States; the vast majority have children under the age of ten.\textsuperscript{195}

When parents are removed, families must decide whether the children of the family will depart with their removed parent(s) or remain in the United States, under the supervision and care of individuals who are not their parents.\textsuperscript{196} For children who remain in the United States, the permanent separation from their parents can be

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\textsuperscript{189} Hagan et al., supra note 185, at 1820.
\textsuperscript{190} Id.
\textsuperscript{194} Id. at 2; Removal Involving Illegal Alien Parents, supra note 192, at 1; Marcela Mendoza & Edward M. Olivos, Advocating for Control with Compassion: The Impacts of Raids and Deportations on Children and Families, 11 Or. Rev. Int'l L. 111, 117 (2009).
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emotionally traumatic and crippling. Children left behind often display severe mental health issues, start to perform poorly in school, display behavioral problems, and have feelings of abandonment as well as resentment. 197 Separation and dismantlement of the familial structure may result in long-term emotional, financial, and psychological damage to the children left behind. 198 Children who return with their parents to their removed parent’s country of origin do not fare much better. 199 United States citizen children experience multiple traumas as they attempt to integrate into a country, culture, and society that they do not know. 200 They also face economic disadvantages and may face inadequate living conditions. 201 In addition, children who wish to come back to the United States may face problems of reintegration due to barriers with language, education, cultural acclimation and job skills, ending up in poverty. 202

When parents are suddenly detained, the ability to seek alternative forms of child care may not be possible. Therefore, many children might become wards of the state and placed into the foster care system. 203 Children who grow up in the foster care system are, unfortunately, less likely to be active contributors to society because they are more likely to rely on public assistance and have severe educational deficiencies. 204 They also suffer higher rates of homelessness,
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unemployment, and pregnancy and may be more likely to be incarcerated as an adult.205

Sadly the financial and emotional devastation to families caused by removal of family members is often never alleviated. Many families are never reunited under one roof and do not recover from the devastating effects of a family member’s removal.206

D. Impact of Removals of Latinos on Their Communities

The negative effects of Latino removals are also experienced by the communities from which Latino immigrants are removed or targeted.207 While the consequences of removals for the community are diverse, four categories of repercussions are often apparent: psychological effects, economic effects, increased mistrust in local law enforcement, and increased strain on civil society resources, community services and local charities.

The psychological trauma inflicted on the community by mass Latino removals alters the culture of the remaining community. Communities are typically enveloped by widespread feelings of immense and constant fear.208 Social isolation often develops.209 Community-wide depression has been observed.210 Anecdotal evidence shows that uncertainty about the future results in community paralysis as individu-


207. Hing, supra note 198, at 322 (“ICE raids and increased enforcement have caused severe social and civic damage and major set backs for many communities.”).


209. Mendoza & Olivos, supra note 194, at 118 (“The long-term impacts on immigrant communities ... are less understood, but scholars point to enduring mistrust of law enforcement and child welfare agencies, development of a ‘culture of fear,’ and social isolation.”); see also Hagan et al., supra note 185, at 1815-16 (noting that in one county in North Carolina, immigrants reported they no longer attended community events or went to public places like parks because of a fear of apprehension).

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als become fearful to leave their homes, community businesses cease their operations, and necessary future community planning stops.

Second, the economic effects of removals have the potential to financially ruin entire communities. This phenomenon was perhaps best documented in Postville, Iowa, where hundreds of immigrant workers, mostly Mexican and Guatemalan, were detained during a 2008 ICE raid. The raid was described as nothing short of a man-made disaster and had many adverse economic consequences. The raid took place at an Agriprocessors Inc. Meatpacking Company plant, which was the county’s largest employer. As a result of the raid, the company declared bankruptcy and virtually closed within six months, leaving behind hundreds of unemployed workers. In a domino effect, several other local businesses closed. Within approximately eighteen months, the town’s population had depleted by half. Abandoned housing units deteriorated. In addition to these troubles, bank foreclosures, slumping retail sales, and un-


213. See Olsson, supra note 187 (“No one has a project or a plan for the future anymore, because you don’t know what’s going to happen. There’s not any more ‘tonight,’ there’s not any more ‘in the morning’ or ‘next week’ or ‘next month.’ You’re just in between. This is not our community anymore, not the one we used to have before all these things.”).

214. See KOULISH, supra note 11, at 47 (calling the Postville raid “perhaps one of the most egregious examples of the Bush era criminalization on immigration”).


218. Id.

219. Id.


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paid tax bills\textsuperscript{223} drained local government revenues to the point that the town’s council attempted to have Postville declared a federal disaster zone.\textsuperscript{224}

Third, involvement of members of local law enforcement agencies in the removals leads to mistrust of law enforcement and damaged rapport between the police and the community in general.\textsuperscript{225} Section 287(g) programs have been particularly noted to prevent important community and local law enforcement actions.\textsuperscript{226} Crime in affected communities has been reported to increase as residents lose trust in the police and do not report general criminal activity.\textsuperscript{227} Individuals fear reporting crimes committed against them because they fear either they or someone they know may be removed.\textsuperscript{228} Some commentators fear that the use of local law enforcement in immigration enforcement will not only jeopardize future crime prevention but also retard previous gains in crime reduction.\textsuperscript{229}

Last, removals strain community resources to the detriment of the general welfare of the affected communities.\textsuperscript{230} As discussed earlier, removals impoverish numerous individuals and families.\textsuperscript{231} Community volunteer groups, social service organizations, and public aid resources have been taxed to provide livelihood necessities—such as rent and utility payments, as well as basic necessities such as food and diapers.\textsuperscript{232} Many affected individuals must resort to public assistance like Medicaid and food stamps for the first time in their lives.\textsuperscript{233} Schools, early childhood centers, child welfare agencies, churches, and community-based organizations are left to play the role of first responder in helping with the fallout. Community resources are de-
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pleted as these institutions are forced to absorb the aftershocks of crimmigration removals.

CONCLUSION

Latinos, both citizen and noncitizen alike, have consistently been marginalized in the United States. The historical experience of Latinos in this country is one composed of multiple episodes of discrimination and exclusion. Latinos have been refused citizenship and its benefits, repeatedly denied legal or permanent entry, violently lynched, and openly targeted for deportation because of their Latino identity.

Most of these historical episodes were blatantly justified by references to the inferiority of the Latino race. In the mid 1800s, Mexicans following the Mexican War could often not become citizens unless they could be deemed “white.” From 1850 to 1935, Latinos could be lynched for being “too Mexican” or speaking Spanish too loudly. From 1929-1939, Mexicans were specifically scapegoated for the country’s economic woes. Mexican Repatriation began the perpetual hunt for “Mexican-looking” individuals in 1929.

In more recent decades, marginalizing measures based on overt Latino prejudice have been challenged. While the 1917 Bisbee deportation was tolerated and even applauded in its era, a successful racial profiling lawsuit followed the Chandler Roundup in 1997. Unfortunately, although overt Latino prejudice is no longer usually tolerated as a proper basis for legal measures, the marginalization of Latinos continues in this country.

Currently, the incorporation of immigration law into the criminal justice system serves to extend and solidify the longstanding marginalization of Latinos to present day. Crimmigration has proven to be an effective vehicle for modern Latino oppression. It has expanded and entrenched a “criminal alien” social construct that both legitimizes and increases the harsh measures against Latinos. Simultaneously, it relies on a national security and safety rhetoric that prevents criticism and examination of the detrimental impact on the Latino population. As the failure of crimmigration measures to address national security threats or dangerous crime becomes apparent, the most successful consequence of crimmigration should be addressed—the continuation of a history of marginalization of Latinos in this country. This is the only solution that will ensure justice and equality for the millions of Latinos living in the United States.

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