



Insecure Communities: Latino Perceptions of Police Involvement in Immigration Enforcement

Nik Theodore
Department of Urban Planning and Policy
University of Illinois at Chicago

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Research Team:

Lake Research Partners:

Celinda Lake, Josh Ulibarri, Cornelia Treptow, Dom Bartkus

PolicyLink:

Angela Glover Blackwell, Milly Hawk Daniel

University of Illinois at Chicago:

Nik Theodore, Robby Habbans

Executive Summary

This report presents findings from a survey of Latinos regarding their perceptions of law enforcement authorities in light of the greater involvement of police in immigration enforcement. Lake Research Partners designed and administered a randomized telephone survey of 2,004 Latinos living in the counties of Cook (Chicago), Harris (Houston), Los Angeles, and Maricopa (Phoenix). The survey was designed to assess the impact of police involvement in immigration enforcement on Latinos' perceptions of public safety and their willingness to contact the police when crimes have been committed. The survey was conducted in English and Spanish by professional interviewers during the period November 17 to December 10, 2012.

Survey results indicate that the increased involvement of police in immigration enforcement has significantly heightened the fears many Latinos have of the police, contributing to their social isolation and exacerbating their mistrust of law enforcement authorities. Key findings include:

- 44 percent of Latinos surveyed reported they are less likely to contact police officers if they have been the victim of a crime because they fear that police officers will use this interaction as an opportunity to inquire into their immigration status or that of people they know.
- 45 percent of Latinos stated that they are less likely to voluntarily offer information about crimes, and 45 percent are less likely to report a crime because they are afraid the police will ask them or people they know about their immigration status.
- 70 percent of undocumented immigrants reported they are less likely to contact law enforcement authorities if they were victims of a crime.
- Fear of police contact is not confined to immigrants. For example, 28 percent of US-born Latinos said they are less likely to contact police officers if they have been the victim of a crime because they fear that police officers will use this interaction as an opportunity to inquire into their immigration status or that of people they know.
- 38 percent of Latinos reported they feel like they are under more suspicion now that local law enforcement authorities have become involved in immigration enforcement. This figure includes 26 percent of US-born respondents, 40 percent of foreign-born respondents, and 58 percent of undocumented immigrant respondents.
- When asked how often police officers stop Latinos without good reason or cause, 62 percent said very or somewhat often, including 58 percent of US-born respondents, 64 percent of foreign-born respondents, and 78 percent of undocumented immigrant respondents.

These findings reveal one of the unintended consequences of the involvement of state and local police in immigration enforcement – a reduction in public safety as Latinos’ mistrust of the police increases as a result of the involvement of police in immigration enforcement. The following conclusions can be drawn from the survey findings:

- 1. Isolation and disconnectedness from police:** Many Latinos feel isolated from the law enforcement officers who are sworn to protect them. More than four in ten say that because police are more involved in enforcing immigration laws they have become less likely to volunteer information about crimes because they fear getting caught in the web of immigration enforcement themselves or bringing unwanted attention to their family or friends.
- 2. Withdrawal:** Many Latinos feel isolated and admit to withdrawing from their community. A large share feels under suspicion and is afraid to leave their homes. This sense of withdrawal by a substantial portion of Latinos in the counties surveyed has short- and long-term negative consequences for public safety and community life. In the short term, crimes become more difficult to solve as the social distance between police and residents increases. Over the long term, a significant segment of the population may withdraw and develop a fear of law enforcement authorities.
- 3. Diminished sense of public safety:** Rather than feeling safer because of increased police involvement in immigration enforcement, many Latinos feel less safe. Many Latinos say criminals are moving into their neighborhoods, making them and their neighbors less safe, because criminals know residents are less likely to report them to police given the increased involvement of police in immigration enforcement. Few feel safer because of the increased focus on immigration by local law enforcement.

The findings presented here indicate that the greater involvement of police in immigration enforcement has significantly heightened the fears many Latinos have of the police, contributing to their social isolation and exacerbating their mistrust of law enforcement authorities. This fear, isolation and mistrust, in turn, has led to a reduction in public safety, a serious negative consequence of the involvement of police in immigration enforcement.

Introduction: The Role of State and Local Police in Immigration Enforcement

This report presents findings from a survey of Latinos regarding their perceptions of the police in light of state and local law enforcement's increasing involvement in immigration enforcement.¹ A randomized telephone survey of 2,004 Latinos living in the counties of Cook (Chicago), Harris (Houston), Los Angeles, and Maricopa (Phoenix) was conducted to assess the impact of police involvement in immigration enforcement on Latinos' perceptions of public safety and their willingness to contact the police when crimes have been committed.

Survey results indicate that the greater involvement of police in immigration enforcement has significantly heightened the fears many Latinos have of the police, contributing to their social isolation and exacerbating their mistrust of law enforcement authorities. The results show that substantial numbers of Latinos are less likely to voluntarily contact the police if they are the victim of a crime, or to provide information about a crime, because they are afraid the police will ask them or persons they know about their immigration status. These findings highlight one of the unintended consequences of the involvement of state and local police in immigration enforcement – a reduction in public safety as residents' mistrust of the police increases as a result of the involvement of police in immigration enforcement.

Historically, the control of migration to the United States has fallen under the purview and authority of the federal government. The U.S. Supreme Court has repeatedly affirmed that the federal government has broad and exclusive powers to regulate immigration and to set immigration policy. Nevertheless, over the past two decades, state and local law enforcement authorities have increasingly been drawn into the enforcement of immigration laws. There now exists a patchwork of federal, state and local laws, as well as numerous formal and informal agreements, that call on state and local law enforcement agencies to actively participate in immigration enforcement (see Meissner et al., 2013; Rodríguez et al., 2010; Varsanyi, 2010).

These new provisions have not been without controversy. Concerns have been raised that the increasing involvement of state and local police in immigration enforcement will increase the mistrust immigrant communities have towards the police, thereby reducing public safety. More specifically, concerns have been raised that by increasing the priority given to investigating immigration matters, law enforcement resources will be directed away from important public safety objectives; police may resort to racial profiling or be prone to violating the civil liberties of possible suspects; the financial costs of immigration enforcement will come at the expense of other public-safety priorities; undocumented immigrants may be victimized in greater numbers because they will be fearful of police contact; and the trust between police and communities that is essential for effective policing will be

¹ Numerous studies have identified a gap in the research literature on Latino perceptions of policing and public safety, noting the paucity of studies that examine Latino perceptions and interactions with the police. See for example, Correia (2010); Menjívar and Bejarano (2004); Rosenbaum et al. (2005); Weitzer and Tuch (2005).

undermined (Capps et al., 2011; International Association of Chiefs of Police, 2007; Khashu, 2009; Meissner et al., 2013; Stepick et al., 2013).

The clearest expression of the desire to see greater collaboration between federal immigration authorities and state and local law enforcement agencies can be seen in the 287(g) program and the Secure Communities program. In 1996, Congress enacted legislation that formally expanded the role of state and local law enforcement authorities in immigration enforcement. The Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act (IIRIRA) amended the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952 to allow the Immigration and Naturalization Service to deputize state and local law enforcement officials in the event of a “mass influx” of immigrants, provided that the state or local law enforcement agency consents to this new role.²

IIRIRA also revised Section 287(g) of the Immigration and Nationality Act to authorize the U.S. Attorney General to enter into written memoranda of understanding (MOUs) with state and local law enforcement authorities to formally involve them in immigration enforcement.³ The IIRIRA states that “the Attorney General may enter into a written agreement with a State, or any political subdivision of a State, pursuant to which an officer or employee of the State or subdivision, who is determined by the Attorney General to be qualified to perform a function of an immigration officer in relation to the investigation, apprehension or detention of

aliens in the United States ..., may carry out such function at the expense of the State or political subdivision and to extent consistent with State and local law.”⁴ Should a state or local law enforcement agency consent to entering into an MOU, officers must receive training in federal immigration law, the agency must provide written certification that officers are trained in immigration law, and any officer who engages in immigration enforcement is subject to the direction and supervision of the US Department of Homeland Security. According to US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), as of December 31, 2012, more than 1,300 state and local law enforcement officers in 19 states have been trained and certified to enforce immigration law, and the budget devoted to 287(g) agreements has increased from \$5 million in fiscal year 2006 to \$68 million in fiscal year 2012 (ICE, 2013a,b).

The Secure Communities program began in 2008 as a pilot initiative in 14 jurisdictions, but subsequently expanded to nearly all of the nation’s 3,181 jails and prisons under President Barack Obama. Through the program, law enforcement authorities submit the fingerprints of arrestees to immigration databases, allowing ICE access to information about persons who are being held by authorities. A number of concerns have been raised about Secure Communities, including that “many of the immigrants who have been identified and deported through the program are not serious or violent criminals, do not pose a threat to public safety, and may not have any criminal history at all;” it may lead to unnecessary detentions; and it might deter

² Pub. L. No. 104-208, 110 Stat. 3009-646 (1996) 8 U.S.C. § 1103(a)(10). In 2003, the responsibilities of the Immigration and Naturalization Service were transferred to three entities within the US Department of Homeland Security: US Citizenship and Immigration Services, US Immigration and Customs Enforcement, and U.S. Customs and Border Protection. US Immigration and Customs Enforcement is the entity that currently is empowered to enter into MOUs with state and local law enforcement agencies.

³ 8 U.S.C. § 1357(g).

⁴ 8 U.S.C. § 1357(g)(1).

witnesses from coming forward while also contributing to a loss of trust of the police by local residents (Waslin, 2011: 8, 14, 12-13; see also Stepick et al., 2013).

However, according to ICE (2013b), "By working together, local and federal officers can better identify and remove criminal aliens - a tremendous benefit to public safety." But does the involvement of state and local law enforcement agencies in immigration enforcement actually contribute to an improvement of public safety? Analyzing arrest and detention records for the Secure Communities program in Miami-Dade County, Florida, Alex Stepick and colleagues (2013: 7-8) found that only 18 percent of those targeted by the program were high-priority risks to public safety, and that "the majority of removals [deportations] are individuals who pose little or no risk to public safety." The authors conclude, "ICE's detention and deportation of immigrants for minor crimes, ordinary misdemeanors, and non-offense incidents reduces trust of law enforcement" (Ibid., 3).

A report published by the Police Foundation (Khashu, 2009: 23) raised similar concerns about the impact of police involvement in immigration enforcement stating, "local police involvement in immigration enforcement could have a chilling effect on immigrant

cooperation [with the police]... Without this cooperation, law enforcement will have difficulty apprehending and successfully prosecuting criminals, thereby reducing overall public safety for the larger community." Such concerns stem from the recognition that it is exceedingly difficult for law enforcement authorities to investigate crimes, apprehend criminals, and deter criminal activity without the trust and active participation of local residents. Moreover, it is not only immigrants who are affected. Approximately 85 percent of immigrant families are mixed-status families that include a combination of citizens, authorized immigrants, and undocumented immigrants (Morawetz and Das, 2009). Therefore, the family and community dynamics that are set in motion by state and local law enforcement's involvement in immigration policing affects immigrants and non-immigrants alike.

The remainder of this report presents the results of a survey that was designed to measure how and to what extent police involvement in immigration enforcement has affected Latinos' perceptions of the police and public safety. The next section describes the methodology used for conducting the survey. This is followed by a presentation of survey findings, and an analysis of factors associated with Latinos' propensity to report crimes.

Survey Methodology

A telephone survey of Latinos was designed and implemented by Lake Research Partners, a public opinion research firm with extensive experience in administering telephone surveys. Professional interviewers administered the survey during the period November 17 to December 10, 2012. The survey reached 501 Latinos in each of the following counties: Cook (Chicago), Harris (Houston), Los Angeles, and Maricopa (Phoenix). In total, 2,004 surveys were conducted. Seventy-nine percent of interviews were conducted in Spanish. All interviewers were bilingual and were capable of handling the interviews in Spanish or English. As will be explained in greater detail below, the survey explored Latinos' perceptions and experiences with law enforcement authorities in light of the increasing involvement of police in immigration enforcement.

The survey sample was identified using random digit dialing (RDD) methods that targeted high-density Latino census tracts, where Latinos represented 70 percent or more of the population in Cook, Harris, and Los Angeles Counties, and 50 percent or more of the population in Maricopa County (this lower threshold was used because of the relatively lower Latino population density in Maricopa County). By using RDD, interviewers were able to reach respondents with unlisted telephone numbers. The cell phone sample was pulled by county and then screened for city, ethnicity, and zip code. All respondents were screened for Latino or Hispanic ethnicity, but not for immigrant or citizenship status.

The averages represented in this report are composite averages, where each of the four cities represents 25 percent of the total. Population samples are subject to possible sampling error; that is, the results of a survey may differ from those that would be obtained if the entire population were interviewed. The size of the sampling error depends upon both the total number of respondents in the survey and the percentage distribution of responses to a particular question. The margin of error for the 2,004 respondent averages is ± 2 percent, while for each county individually it is ± 4.4 percent.

Latinos' Perceptions of the Police: A Summary of Findings

The survey instrument was designed to assess the impact of police involvement in immigration enforcement on public safety and on police-community relations. Respondents were asked a randomized series of questions that explored (a) their willingness to contact law enforcement authorities to report crimes or provide information about criminal activities, and (b) their perceptions of personal and public safety in light of increasing police involvement in immigration enforcement. This was followed by a second set of questions pertaining to the nature of respondents' contact with law enforcement authorities and their knowledge of contact that their friends and family members have had with law enforcement authorities in their area.

Responses to the survey questions reveal a clear and consistent pattern: a substantial portion of the Latino populations in Cook, Harris, Los Angeles, and Maricopa Counties

are reluctant to voluntarily contact the police to report a crime or to provide information about crimes specifically *because they fear that police officers will inquire about the immigration status of themselves, their friends, or their family members.*

Willingness to Contact the Police

Figure 1 reports the responses to four statements that explore the willingness of Latinos to contact law enforcement authorities and volunteer information about criminal activities. Respondents were asked whether they strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree with the statements. This section of the report presents data on aggregated responses, combining the strongly agree and somewhat agree categories, as well as the somewhat disagree and strongly disagree categories.

Figure 1: Latinos' willingness to contact law enforcement authorities

I am less likely to contact police officers if I have been a victim of a crime for fear they will ask me or other people I know about our immigration status			
	Agree	Disagree	Don't Know
Total	44%	50%	6%
US Born	28%	68%	4%
Foreign Born	49%	46%	6%
Undocumented	70%	26%	4%
I am less likely to voluntarily offer information about crimes I know have been committed because I am afraid the police officers will ask me or other people I know about our immigration status			
	Agree	Disagree	Don't Know
Total	45%	49%	6%
US Born	29%	66%	5%
Foreign Born	50%	44%	6%
Undocumented	67%	28%	5%

I am less likely to report a crime to law enforcement officers because I am afraid the police officers will ask me or other people I know about our immigration status

	Agree	Disagree	Don't Know
Total	45%	50%	5%
US Born	26%	70%	4%
Foreign Born	50%	44%	5%
Undocumented	67%	28%	5%

Since local law enforcement has become involved in immigration if I am a victim or a witness to a crime I am more likely to tell my church or community leader about it than I am to tell local law officers

	Agree	Disagree	Don't Know
Total	49%	44%	7%
US Born	32%	63%	5%
Foreign Born	54%	39%	8%
Undocumented	68%	26%	7%

The responses to these statements indicate that because police increasingly are involved in enforcing immigration laws, a substantial share of the Latino population in the surveyed counties is less likely to initiate contact with local law enforcement authorities, even if they have been the victim of a crime. Forty-four percent of Latinos surveyed reported they are less likely to contact police officers if they have been the victim of a crime because they fear that police officers will use this interaction as an opportunity to inquire into their immigration status or that of people they know. Undocumented immigrants were especially fearful of such contacts (70% reported they are less likely to contact law enforcement authorities if they were victims of a crime), but this fear is not confined to immigrants; 28 percent of US-born Latinos expressed the same view.

Similarly, 45 percent of Latinos stated that they are less likely to voluntarily offer information about crimes, and 45 percent are less likely to report a crime because they are afraid the police will ask them or people they know about their immigration status. Again, undocumented immigrants were more likely to express such fears. Two-thirds (67%) of undocumented immigrants surveyed reported that they would be less likely to offer information or report a

crime because they are afraid that police will ask them or someone they know about their immigration status. Among US-born Latinos, 29 percent reported they are less likely to voluntarily offer information about crimes they know have been committed, and 26 percent indicated they are less likely to report a crime, because they fear that police will ask them or someone they know about their immigration status.

The findings here show that Latinos increasingly are afraid to contact the police to report crimes and criminal activity because they are worried that law enforcement officers will use this contact as an opportunity to investigate the immigration status of respondents or of people they know. In addition, a substantial proportion of Latinos said that they are more likely to tell their church or community leader about crimes than they are to report this information to the police. Nearly half of Latinos surveyed (49%) agreed with this statement, as did nearly one-third (32%) of US-born Latinos, more than half (54%) of all foreign-born Latinos, and more than two-thirds (68%) of undocumented immigrant Latinos. This suggests that Latinos' lack of trust centers on local law enforcement authorities and not on community institutions or public figures in general.

It is notable that when considering Latinos' willingness to contact law enforcement authorities, differences between the counties in the sample are relatively modest. Overall, Latinos in Maricopa County tend to report greater social distance between themselves and law enforcement authorities, while in Cook County a smaller proportion tends to express such views. This perhaps is unsurprising given that Arizona has enacted new laws that require police to become more involved

in immigration enforcement. But rather than marked differences between the cities, what stands out in the survey results is how closely respondents' views converge around issues of fear, isolation, and the growing social distance between police and Latino residents that is occurring as a result of police involvement in immigration enforcement.

Figure 2 reports the responses to the statements above for each of the four

Figure 2: Latinos' willingness to contact law enforcement authorities, by county

I am less likely to contact police officers if I have been a victim of a crime for fear they will ask me or other people I know about our immigration status			
	Agree	Disagree	Don't Know
Cook County	39%	53%	8%
Harris County	47%	48%	5%
Los Angeles County	40%	55%	5%
Maricopa County	50%	45%	5%
I am less likely to voluntarily offer information about crimes I know have been committed because I am afraid the police officers will ask me or other people I know about our immigration status			
	Agree	Disagree	Don't Know
Cook County	42%	50%	8%
Harris County	45%	50%	5%
Los Angeles County	44%	51%	6%
Maricopa County	49%	47%	5%
I am less likely to report a crime to law enforcement officers because I am afraid the police officers will ask me or other people I know about our immigration status			
	Agree	Disagree	Don't Know
Cook County	39%	55%	5%
Harris County	44%	52%	5%
Los Angeles County	44%	50%	6%
Maricopa County	52%	44%	4%
Since local law enforcement has become involved in immigration if I am a victim or a witness to a crime I am more likely to tell my church or community leader about it than I am to tell local law officers			
	Agree	Disagree	Don't Know
Cook County	48%	43%	8%
Harris County	51%	44%	5%
Los Angeles County	44%	47%	8%
Maricopa County	52%	42%	6%

counties. In Maricopa County, fully half of Latinos surveyed (50%) reported that they are less likely to contact police officers if they have been the victim of a crime because they fear that law enforcement authorities will ask them or people they know about their immigration status. This compares to 39 percent of Latinos in Cook County, 47 percent in Harris County, and 40 percent in Los Angeles County.

Responses were similar when Latinos were asked about their willingness to voluntarily offer information about crimes they know

have been committed: 49 percent of Latinos surveyed in Maricopa County; 42 percent surveyed in Cook County, 45 percent surveyed in Harris County, and 44 percent surveyed in Los Angeles County indicate they are less likely to offer information to the police because they fear law enforcement authorities will ask about the immigration status of themselves or someone they know. Finally, when asked whether they agreed with the statement about whether they are less likely to report a crime to law enforcement officers because they are afraid the police officers will ask them or people

Figure 3: Latinos' perceptions of personal and public safety in light of police involvement in immigration enforcement

I feel safer knowing local law enforcement is involved in immigration enforcement			
	Agree	Disagree	Don't Know
Total	37%	56%	7%
US Born	45%	47%	8%
Foreign Born	35%	59%	7%
Undocumented	40%	55%	5%
There are fewer crimes committed in this area because of an increased police focus on immigration enforcement			
	Agree	Disagree	Don't Know
Total	41%	48%	10%
US Born	34%	54%	12%
Foreign Born	44%	47%	10%
Undocumented	50%	42%	8%
Criminals and drug dealers have actually begun moving into my neighborhood because they know we are afraid to report them now that law officers are more involved in immigration enforcement			
	Agree	Disagree	Don't Know
Total	45%	43%	12%
US Born	31%	60%	10%
Foreign Born	49%	38%	12%
Undocumented	63%	28%	10%
I feel less safe because local law enforcement is more involved in immigration enforcement			
	Agree	Disagree	Don't Know
Total	43%	51%	6%
US Born	29%	67%	5%
Foreign Born	47%	47%	6%
Undocumented	65%	31%	5%

they know about their immigration status, 52 percent of respondents in Maricopa County, 39 percent in Cook County, 44 percent in Harris County, and 44 percent in Los Angeles County agreed with that statement.

In each of the four counties, a large share of Latinos indicated they were more likely to tell a church or community leader about a crime than they were to contact the police. Approximately half of the survey respondents agreed with this statement in Cook (48%), Harris (51%) and Maricopa (52%) Counties, as did 44 percent of respondents in Los Angeles County.

These responses show that the increased involvement by the police in immigration enforcement has contributed to a fear of the police by a substantial share of Latino residents in the four counties where the survey was administered. This fear has led residents to become less likely to volunteer information about criminal activities, even when they themselves have been the victims of a crime. This suggests that police involvement in immigration enforcement has contributed to a growing mistrust of the police by Latinos, increasing the social distance between the police and the communities they serve.

Personal and public safety

Survey responses exploring the impact of local law enforcement authorities' involvement in immigration enforcement show that Latinos are divided about whether they are safer as a result of this involvement in immigration enforcement. Figure 3 reports the responses to four statements concerning personal and public safety. Again, respondents were asked whether they strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree with the statements, and the results here report aggregated agree/disagree responses.

Thirty-seven percent of respondents in the four

counties agreed with the statement that they feel safer knowing local law enforcement is involved in immigration enforcement, while 56 percent disagreed with this statement. Forty-one percent of respondents agreed with the statement that fewer crimes are committed because of increased police focus on immigration enforcement, though 48 percent disagreed with this statement. At the same time, 45 percent of respondents agreed that criminals and drug dealers have been moving into their neighborhoods because they know that residents are afraid to report them to law enforcement officers because police are more involved in immigration enforcement; and 43 percent indicated they feel less safe because law enforcement is more involved in immigration enforcement.

Figure 4 reports the responses to the statements above for each of the counties included in this study. Responses show remarkable consistency across the four counties.

Responses to the set of statements in this section of the report reveal a mixed reaction to local law enforcement's involvement in immigration enforcement. On the one hand, more than one-third of respondents feel safer knowing local law enforcement is involved in immigration enforcement, and 41 percent agree with the statement that fewer crimes are committed because of this focus on immigration enforcement. On the other hand, 43 percent indicate they feel less safe, and 45 percent report that criminals and drug dealers are moving into their neighborhood, because local law enforcement's involvement in immigration enforcement has caused residents to be more afraid of police contact. Immigration status partly explains these disparities. Undocumented immigrants are more likely to indicate they feel less safe and to say that criminals are moving into their neighborhood because police are involved in immigration enforcement. But these views are shared by nearly one-third of US-born Latinos

Figure 4: Latinos' perceptions of personal and public safety in light of police involvement in immigration enforcement, by county

I feel safer knowing local law enforcement is involved in immigration enforcement			
	Agree	Disagree	Don't Know
Cook County	37%	54%	9%
Harris County	42%	52%	6%
Los Angeles County	33%	59%	8%
Maricopa County	37%	57%	6%
There are few crimes committed in this area because of an increased police focus on immigration enforcement			
	Agree	Disagree	Don't Know
Cook County	41%	49%	10%
Harris County	44%	47%	9%
Los Angeles County	43%	48%	10%
Maricopa County	39%	49%	12%
Criminals and drug dealers have actually begun moving into my neighborhood because they know we are afraid to report them now that law officers are more involved in immigration enforcement			
	Agree	Disagree	Don't Know
Cook County	44%	43%	12%
Harris County	45%	44%	11%
Los Angeles County	45%	44%	12%
Maricopa County	45%	41%	14%
I feel less safe because local law enforcement is more involved in immigration enforcement			
	Agree	Disagree	Don't Know
Cook County	39%	54%	7%
Harris County	44%	50%	6%
Los Angeles County	41%	53%	6%
Maricopa County	47%	47%	5%

and nearly half of all immigrant Latinos as well, suggesting that concerns about the negative influence of police involvement in immigration enforcement are widespread and not simply based on citizenship.

Social Isolation

Figure 5 reports the responses to two statements that explore issues of social isolation. Respondents were asked whether they strongly agree, somewhat agree,

somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree with the statements. Again, responses were aggregated, combining the strongly agree and somewhat agree categories, as well as the somewhat disagree and strongly disagree categories.

Survey responses reveal that police involvement in immigration enforcement has resulted in a substantial share of Latinos feeling socially isolated. Thirty-eight percent of respondents agreed with the statement that they are afraid

Figure 5: Latinos’ feelings of social isolation as a result of police involvement in immigration enforcement

I feel afraid to leave my home because local law enforcement officials are more involved in immigration enforcement			
	Agree	Disagree	Don't Know
Total	38%	56%	6%
US Born	22%	73%	5%
Foreign Born	43%	51%	6%
Undocumented	61%	34%	5%
I feel more isolated because local law enforcement is more involved in immigration enforcement			
	Agree	Disagree	Don't Know
Total	42%	51%	7%
US Born	27%	67%	6%
Foreign Born	47%	46%	7%
Undocumented	62%	31%	7%

to leave their home because police are involved in immigration enforcement, and 42 percent agreed that they feel more isolated because of police involvement in immigration matters. Again, undocumented immigrants were more likely to agree with these statements (61% and 62%, respectively), but they were not alone. More than one in five US-born Latinos agreed that they were afraid to leave their home, and more than one-quarter (27%) agreed they felt more isolated, because of this change in policing priorities.

Figure 6 shows that feelings of isolation affect many Latinos in Cook, Harris, Los Angeles and Maricopa Counties. Approximately one-third of respondents agreed that they are afraid to leave their homes in Cook (32%) and Los Angeles (38%) Counties. This figure rises to 40 percent in Harris County and to 43 percent in Maricopa County. When asked whether they felt more isolated because law enforcement authorities are more involved in immigration enforcement, 38 percent of Latinos in Cook County, 43 percent in Harris

Figure 6: Latinos’ feelings of social isolation as a result of police involvement in immigration enforcement, by county

I feel afraid to leave my home because local law enforcement officials are more involved in immigration enforcement			
	Agree	Disagree	Don't Know
Cook County	32%	60%	8%
Harris County	40%	54%	6%
Los Angeles County	36%	58%	6%
Maricopa County	43%	52%	4%
I feel more isolated because local law enforcement is more involved in immigration enforcement			
	Agree	Disagree	Don't Know
Cook County	38%	54%	8%
Harris County	43%	50%	7%
Los Angeles County	37%	55%	8%
Maricopa County	50%	44%	5%

County, 37 percent in Los Angeles County, and 50 percent in Maricopa County agreed with this statement.

Mistrust of the Police

Figure 7 reports the responses to one statement and one question concerning their trust in the police.

Thirty-eight percent of respondents agreed that they feel like they are under more suspicion now that local law enforcement authorities have become involved in immigration enforcement. This figure includes 26 percent of US-born respondents, 40 percent of foreign-born respondents, and 58 percent of undocumented immigrant respondents.

When asked how often police officers stop Latinos without good reason or cause, 62 percent said very or somewhat often, including 58 percent of US-born respondents, 64 percent of foreign-born respondents, and 78 percent of undocumented immigrant respondents.

Figure 8 reveals few differences in response rates in Cook, Harris and Los Angeles Counties, where about one-third of respondents in each county agreed that they feel they are under more suspicion now that police are involved in immigration enforcement, and approximately 60 percent thought that police stop Latinos without good reason or cause. Response rates to these questions were even higher in Maricopa County, where 45 percent perceived that they are under more suspicion, and fully 70 percent stated that police officers stop Latinos without good reason or cause.

Figure 7: Latinos’ mistrust of the police

Since local law enforcement has become involved in immigration enforcement I have begun to feel like I am under more suspicion			
	Agree	Disagree	Don't Know
Total	38%	56%	6%
US Born	26%	68%	6%
Foreign Born	40%	53%	7%
Undocumented	58%	36%	6%

How often do you think police officers stop Latinos and Hispanics on the streets of your city without good reason or cause?			
	Very/somewhat often	Not very/not often	Don't Know
Total	62%	29%	8%
US Born	58%	32%	10%
Foreign Born	64%	28%	8%
Undocumented	78%	19%	4%

Figure 8: Latinos' mistrust of the police, by county

Since local law enforcement has become involved in immigration enforcement I have begun to feel like I am under more suspicion			
	Agree	Disagree	Don't Know
Cook County	33%	59%	8%
Harris County	34%	58%	8%
Los Angeles County	34%	59%	7%
Maricopa County	45%	51%	4%

How often do you think police officers stop Latinos and Hispanics on the streets of your city without good reason or cause?			
	Very/somewhat often	Not very/not often	Don't Know
Cook County	61%	31%	8%
Harris County	58%	33%	9%
Los Angeles County	62%	30%	8%
Maricopa County	70%	22%	9%

Influences on Latinos' Propensity to Report Crimes to Police

The previous section presented results showing that a substantial portion of Latinos surveyed are less likely to voluntarily contact law enforcement authorities when they have been the victim of a crime or if they have information about a crime that has been committed, because they fear that police will ask them or people they know about their immigration status. To further explore the association between an individual's propensity to contact police and his or her traits with respect to demographic characteristics, previous experiences with law enforcement, and immigration and documentation status, we performed a multivariate ordinary least squares regression, with the respondent's propensity to report crimes to the police serving as the dependent variable. To develop a more reliable measure of underlying feelings toward the police and public safety, a multi-item scale was constructed by converting the mean of four individual Likert-scaled survey items into a single interval variable ranging from 0 to 1.⁵ The original items are:

- I am less likely to contact police officers if I have been a victim of a crime for fear they will ask me or other people I know about our immigration status.
- I am less likely to voluntarily offer information about crimes I know have been committed because I am afraid the police officers will ask me or other people I know about our immigration status.
- I am less likely to report a crime to law enforcement officers because I am afraid

the police will ask me or people I know about our immigration status.

- Since local law enforcement has become involved in immigration if I am a victim or a witness to a crime I am more likely to tell my church or community leader about it than I am to tell local law officers.

Two additional scales were constructed in a similar manner to assess the respondent's attitudes about law enforcement. The first measures the respondent's feelings of social isolation as a result of law enforcement, while the second measures the respondent's feelings about the association between law enforcement and public safety. These scales, a set of demographic variables, and additional variables pertaining to the nature of immigration and documentation status, were added to the model as independent variables (Figure 9). The results of the model are presented in Figure 10.

The model explained 63 percent of the variance in responses, and both of the focal variables (*ISOLATED* and *SAFETY*) were statistically significant at the .05 level and had the expected influence on the unwillingness of Latinos to contact police to report a crime or to provide information about a crime. The results suggest Latinos with high levels of social isolation have a weaker propensity to voluntarily contact the police. Likewise, Latinos who are concerned about a decline in public safety as a result of police involvement in immigration enforcement also are less likely to contact the police. In addition to these factors,

⁵ This scale was then tested for internal reliability using Cronbach's Alpha, $\alpha = .844$.

Figure 9: Description of variables

Variable Name	Description
<i>ISOLATED</i>	<p>Scale to measure respondent's association between a sense of isolation and law enforcement, constructed from the following items:</p> <p>I feel more isolated because local law enforcement is more involved in immigration enforcement</p> <p>I feel afraid to leave my house because local law enforcement officials are more involved in immigration enforcement</p> <p>$\alpha = .716$</p>
<i>SAFETY</i>	<p>Scale to measure respondent's association between law enforcement and public safety, constructed from the following items:</p> <p>I feel less safe because local law enforcement is more involved in immigration enforcement</p> <p>I feel afraid to leave my house because local law enforcement officials are more involved in immigration enforcement</p> <p>Criminals and drug dealers have actually begun moving into my neighborhood because they know we are afraid to report them now that law officers are more involved in immigration enforcement.</p> <p>$\alpha = .699$</p>
<i>AGE1829</i>	Respondent is between the ages of 18 to 29
<i>AGE4564</i>	Respondent is between the ages of 45 to 64
<i>AGE65up</i>	Respondent is 65 years or older
<i>HSGRAD</i>	Respondent is a high school graduate
<i>IMMIG</i>	Respondent is foreign-born
<i>COLLGRAD</i>	Respondent is a college graduate
<i>UNEMP</i>	Respondent is currently unemployed
<i>CHILD</i>	Respondent has children under the age of 18
<i>DEPORT</i>	Respondent knows someone who has been deported
<i>UNDOC</i>	Respondent is an undocumented immigrant
<i>UNDOCASSOC</i>	Respondent has family, friends, or other associates who are undocumented
<i>MALE</i>	Respondent is male

Figure 10: Influence of perceptions of public safety and social isolation on the willingness to voluntarily contact the police to report crimes

	B	SE
ISOLATED	-.378	.027***
SAFETY	-.413	.030***
AGE1829	.025	.024
AGE4564	.008	.018
AGE65up	-.012	.029
HSGRAD	-.021	.011
IMMIG	-.044	.014**
COLLGRAD	.018	.020
UNEMP	.001	.018
CHILD	.025	.011*
DEPORT	-.035	.012**
UNDOC	-.022	.015
UNDOCASSOC	-.026	.012*
MALE	-.008	.010
Constant	.948	.018***

N = 1,472
 Adjusted $r^2 = .629$
 * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

the following were found to be associated with Latinos' reluctance to voluntarily contact the police:

- Being an immigrant
- Having friends or family who have been deported
- Having friends or family who are undocumented immigrants

Conversely, parents of children under the age of 18 are more likely to voluntarily contact the police with information about crimes that have been committed.

While these results are exploratory, they support the notion that, even when controlling for strong negative feelings about the impact of police enforcement of immigration laws on

social isolation and public safety, Latinos who are immigrants, those who have family or friends who are undocumented immigrants, and those who have family or friends who have been deported report a lower predisposition to report crimes to the police. This finding is an indication of how immigration status and high levels of deportation can affect perceptions of the police, by both immigrant and non-immigrant Latinos, as well as by Latino citizens and noncitizens. These factors are undoubtedly related, with deportation policies leading to the increasing social distance between police and Latinos. The large share of "mixed status" families that include undocumented immigrants, authorized immigrants, and US citizens is likely a factor here as well; deportation policies frequently result in family separation, and many Latinos perceive police contact as placing themselves or their family members and friends at risk. As a result, they are less likely to voluntarily contact police to report crimes.

Conclusion

The conventional wisdom in law enforcement circles is that for effective police-community relations to be developed and maintained, police must forge bonds of trust with the communities they serve. The willingness of residents to voluntarily contact the police when they have been the victim of or a witness to a crime depends on these bonds of trust. For this reason, law enforcement agencies proactively engage in efforts to foster closer working relationships with the communities they serve, including the widespread implementation of community policing initiatives. To the extent that law enforcement practices undermine bonds of trust with segments of the population, these aspects of policing are typically viewed as problematic and in need of reform.

State and local law enforcement authorities increasingly are involved in immigration enforcement, whether under the 287(g) program, the Secure Communities program, or various state laws. This report has identified an important unintended consequence of police involvement in immigration enforcement: a substantial portion of the Latino populations in Cook, Harris, Los Angeles, and Maricopa Counties are reluctant to voluntarily contact the police to report a crime or to provide information about crimes, specifically because they fear that police officers will inquire about the immigration status of themselves, their friends, or their family members. The survey findings indicate that:

- 1. Isolation and disconnectedness from police:** Many Latinos feel isolated from the law enforcement officers who are sworn to protect them. More than four in ten would be more likely to turn to a church or community leader than to law enforcement authorities if they are victims of or witness to a crime, for fear they would call attention to their own immigration status or that of someone they know. Similarly, more than four in ten say that because police are more involved in enforcing immigration laws they have become less likely to volunteer information about crimes because they fear getting caught in the web of immigration enforcement themselves or bringing unwanted attention to their family or friends.
- 2. Withdrawal:** Many Latinos feel isolated and admit to withdrawing from their community. A large share feels under suspicion and is afraid to leave their homes. This sense of withdrawal by a substantial portion of Latinos in the counties surveyed – especially those younger and raising children – has short- and long-term negative consequences for public safety and community life. In the short term, crimes become more difficult to solve as the social distance between police and residents increases. Over the long term, a significant segment of the population may withdraw and develop a fear of law enforcement authorities.
- 3. Diminished sense of public safety:** Rather than feeling safer because of increased police involvement in immigration enforcement, many Latinos feel less safe. Many Latinos say criminals are moving into their neighborhoods, making them and their neighbors less safe, because criminals know residents are less likely to report them to police given the increased involvement of police in immigration enforcement. Few feel safer because of the increased focus on immigration by local law enforcement.

The findings presented here indicate that the greater involvement of police in immigration enforcement has significantly heightened the fears many Latinos have of the police, contributing to their social isolation and exacerbating their mistrust of law enforcement authorities. This fear, isolation and mistrust, in turn, has led to a reduction in public safety, a serious negative consequence of the involvement of police in immigration enforcement.

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Department of Urban Planning and Policy
University of Illinois at Chicago

