

## CALL FOR ARTICLES

*RSF: The Russell Sage Foundation Journal of the Social Sciences*

Undocumented Immigration: Effects of Policy On the Experience of Illegality

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Roughly one-third of the foreign-born population residing in the United States is unauthorized, totaling nearly twelve million individuals. In the absence of sweeping changes in federal immigration law, various policies in the United States effectively relegate the unauthorized to a secondary status, with labor market opportunities limited to low-wage jobs and informal employment and binding restrictions to social mobility for both adults and children. However, while tighter border enforcement has made it more likely for undocumented immigrants to stay in the United States once here, the current period has been marked by record levels of deportations. High deportation levels, aggressive prosecution for immigration violations in federal courts, and increasing cooperation between local and federal authorities in enforcing immigration law have likely pushed undocumented immigrants further out on the margins of their communities and isolated them from many formal public institutions. And in the absence of federal immigration reform, states and municipalities have been left to craft their own proposed solutions. Taken together, current policies and practices have shaped the everyday experiences and a range of outcomes of a relatively large and settled population of undocumented immigrants. However, these individuals do not live in isolation, and these practices have also had ripple effects on their citizen spouses and children, legal resident relatives, native-born, co-ethnics, and their neighbors and co-workers.

In this special issue of *RSF* we will assemble an interdisciplinary team of researchers employing a wide range of methodologies to explore the effects of federal, state, and local policy on the experience of illegality in the United States in its multiple domains. In particular, the authors will investigate the effects of illegality on various pathways to social mobility and the barriers created by this status to full civic participation in the country's institutions.

We are not tied to the exact topic areas to be addressed and would like remain open to research on particular topics that we had not thought of ahead of time. That being said, we believe that most of the papers will fall within one of the following topics.

### **The Effect of Undocumented Status on Human Capital Accumulation and Labor Market Outcomes**

Immigration legislation passed in 1996 greatly enhanced border enforcement. It is widely believed that this policy led to great reductions in circular return migration of undocumented immigrants between the United States and Mexico. In other words, with tighter border enforcement, once someone made it across the border, they were more likely to stay in the United States. We have also seen several decades of undocumented migration in a legal context that severely hinders educational attainment and penalizes workers. There are an estimated 11.7 million undocumented immigrants living in the United States today. Of those, nearly 2 million have been in the United States since childhood. For many, despite strong ties to the United States, their unauthorized status limits their full participation in society.

Indeed, a prolonged lack of formal legal residency status affects a whole range of educational and labor market outcomes. However, we still know little about the factors that influence occupational mobility and power and sources of stratification among the larger pool of undocumented immigrants.

Papers within this area might broadly consider:

- How wages are set in jobs with a high level of undocumented workers: What are the factors that set those prevailing wages, and how have undocumented workers attempted to get some power in the wage negotiation? And how minimum wage increases affect subminimum wages
- How do legal limitations impact expectations regarding the returns to education? And, as a consequence, how do they affect educational attainment?
- How has the recent Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) policy influence postsecondary school and work expectations and outcomes?
- Has a forced permanency impacted the rate at which undocumented immigrants acquire English language proficiency, both through increase exposure to life in the United States as well as through enhanced incentives to learn English?
- What does upward mobility look like? And how career trajectories differ by race, national origin, and gender? These are just a few ideas tying immigration policy to human capital accumulation among the undocumented. We invite potential project participants to be creative in their proposed projects. We will consider proposals in this subject area not related to the suggestions above.

### **Immigration Enforcement and Deportation**

Over the past decade, a combination of detention and removal quotas set by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), a crackdown on the discretionary powers of federal agents and prosecutors, and the enlistment of thousands of local and state law enforcement personnel to act

as immigration agents, has resulted in unprecedented levels of immigration enforcement. In 2012, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) detained 478,000 foreign nationals, and removed 410,000. In total, there have been more removals during the last ten years than during the previous 110 years combined. The number of annual removals now exceeds the number of border apprehensions, suggesting that more noncitizens are being deported from the interior of the U.S.—from homes, places of work, bus stations, roadways—than are being caught trying to illegally enter in the first place.

We seek to understand the effects of these enforcement measures on individuals, families, and communities.

- What is the impact of these practices on household composition and the economic wellbeing of legal family members left behind (in particular, children)?
- What are the effects on school attendance, labor force participation, help-seeking behavior and health status, reporting of crime, perceptions of safety, and of perceptions and experiences of discrimination?
- What are the potential consequences of these changes for sending communities in Mexico, Central America, and elsewhere?

We invite research proposals in this topic area of all methodological varieties.

### **Immigration Law Enforcement and the Criminal Justice System**

Over the past ten years, there have been several notable changes in immigration enforcement strategies that may have greatly impacted the lives of the undocumented. First, beginning about ten years ago, the federal government began establishing agreements with local law enforcement agencies to share information regarding immigration status of those arrested for non-immigration violations. The increasing prevalence of these agreements may have impacted the likelihood that undocumented immigrants call the police in the event of victimization or cooperate with local authorities in investigations. In addition, there has been a pronounced increase in the proportion of federal prison inmates whose primary offense is an immigration offense.

Additionally, a burgeoning literature exists to address the “school-to-prison pipeline”: the complex web of laws, policies and practices that result in the funneling of some children out of the classroom and into the juvenile justice and adult criminal justice systems. Less has been done to assess the interaction between schools and what the Migration Policy Institute recently called the “formidable machinery” of immigration enforcement. While undocumented youth are entitled to free public education, schools are increasingly operating as pipelines to the justice system at the very time that state and local officials exercising their law enforcement arrest authority have much of the discretion that matters when it comes to triggering deportation.

We are interested in papers that explore the relationship between immigration law enforcement, the criminal justice system, and everyday community practices.

- Are Hispanic crime victims with characteristics most like those of the undocumented less likely to report the victimization to the police?

- What types of prosecutions and offenders are behind the very fast increase in the federal prison population incarcerated for immigration violation?
- Whether, when and how are school officials using their discretion to shape the immigration consequences of school disciplinary policies and practices?
- What happens to undocumented youth entering their late twenties and early thirties?
- What are the implications of heightened integration of enforcement on mixed status families?

## **Immigration and Health Care**

Since the changes brought about by the 1996 laws, non-citizens have increasingly lost important access to social welfare programs. Driven by a widely held belief that immigrants were drawn to the United States by the strong pull of state benefits, welfare reform restricted legal immigrants' access to cash-transfer programs such as welfare as well as to other social safety net programs such as food stamps and health insurance. Legal immigrants were also barred from using Medicaid for five years after their entry. And undocumented immigrants continued to be barred from assistance, except for short term disaster relief and emergency medical care. These laws also gave new powers to states, granting them the authority to deny benefits to noncitizens, significantly curbing immigrant integration policies while bolstering immigrant enforcement efforts.

Recent studies have pointed to the link between immigration status and health outcomes. Yet, most undocumented immigrants lack access to care. We seek papers that explore access to health care among the undocumented and how this may or may not change with the Affordable Health Care Act.

- What are the short- and long-term costs to communities?
- What are the effects on health status and health care behaviors?
- What are the effects of state policies providing forms of health care on families?

## **Other potential topics**

In addition to the research ideas listed above, other topics of potential interest include the politics of immigration policy (i.e., the consequences of beliefs and attitudes about immigration at the national and local level); the effects of undocumented status on population movements; the effects of undocumented status on identity, civic engagement, and political participation; and issues of data access and availability in measuring and studying undocumented populations.

The research ideas listed above are meant to be illustrative but not constraining. The call for proposals should be interpreted broadly both in terms of specific research questions and methodological approach. We hope that through an open call we will attract a wide variety of research proposals and will be able to assemble an informative and innovative collection of research studies on the intersection of immigration policy and the choices available to undocumented immigrants in the United States.

Anticipated Timeline

**Prospective contributors should submit a CV and an abstract (up to two pages in length, single or double spaced) of their study along with up to two pages of supporting material (e.g., tables, figures, pictures, etc.) no later than 5 PM EST on May 15, 2015 to:**

**<https://rsfjournal.onlineapplicationportal.com>**

All submissions must be original work that has not been previously published in part or in full. Only abstracts submitted to <https://rsfjournal.onlineapplicationportal.com> will be considered. Each paper will receive a \$1,000 honorarium when the issue is published. The journal issue is being edited by Roberto G. Gonzales, Graduate School of Education, Harvard University, and Steven Raphael, Goldman School of Public Policy, University of California, Berkeley. All questions regarding this issue should be directed to Suzanne Nichols, Director of Publications, at [journals@rsage.org](mailto:journals@rsage.org) and not to the email addresses of the editors of the special issue.

A conference will take place at RSF in New York City on **October 2, 2015**. The selected contributors will gather for a one-day workshop to present draft papers (due on September 9, 2015, a month prior to the conference) and receive feedback from the other contributors and editors. Travel costs, food, and lodging will be covered by the foundation. Papers will be circulated before the conference. After the conference, the authors will submit their revised drafts. The papers will then be sent out to two additional scholars for formal peer review. Having received feedback from reviewers and the RSF board, authors will revise their papers. The full and final issue will be published in the late 2016. Papers will be published open access on the RSF website as well as in several digital repositories, including JSTOR.