The US Deportation System: History, Impacts, and New Empirical Research

CAITLIN PATLER AND BRADFORD JONES

The United States is unique in the size and scope of its deportation system. Between 2001 and 2022, US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) carried out nearly 6.5 million deportations. Deportation is often framed as a singular event that happens to an individual. We conceptualize deportation more broadly as a system that encompasses premigration, within-US, and post-deportation contexts and outcomes. In this introduction, we explain this conceptualization, establishing the existence of differential paths into the deportation system that begin even prior to migration, depending on migrants' access to paths to legal entry, which are shaped by political and economic factors. We then review multidisciplinary literature on the implications of the deportation system for individuals, families, and communities in the United States, as well as for the US economy, politics, and political outcomes. Finally, we review research on post-deportation outcomes in countries of origin and how deportation can lead to remigration to the United States, thus rebooting the deportation system. While a broad and interdisciplinary literature has helped illuminate the deportation system, there is still much to learn. To that end, we end with a description of the contributions of this issue and directions and challenges for future research.

Keywords: deportation, immigrant detention, immigration enforcement, immigration policy, crimmigration, unauthorized immigrants

The United States is unique in the size and scope of its deportation system. Between 2001 and 2022, US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) carried out nearly 6.5 million deportations. This represents a stark departure from the approximately 17,000 average total annual removals from 1892 to 1995 (Patler and Golash-Boza 2017). Figure 1 illustrates this dramatic change by plotting removals from 1892 (the first year the US government officially began reporting deportation statistics) through 2022 (panel A) and deportations as a percentage

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Figure 1. Deportations over Time and as a Percentage of the Foreign-Born Population

Panel A. Deportations by Year
(Fiscal Year 1892–2022)

Panel B. Deportations as a Percentage of the
Foreign-Born Population, 1955–2022
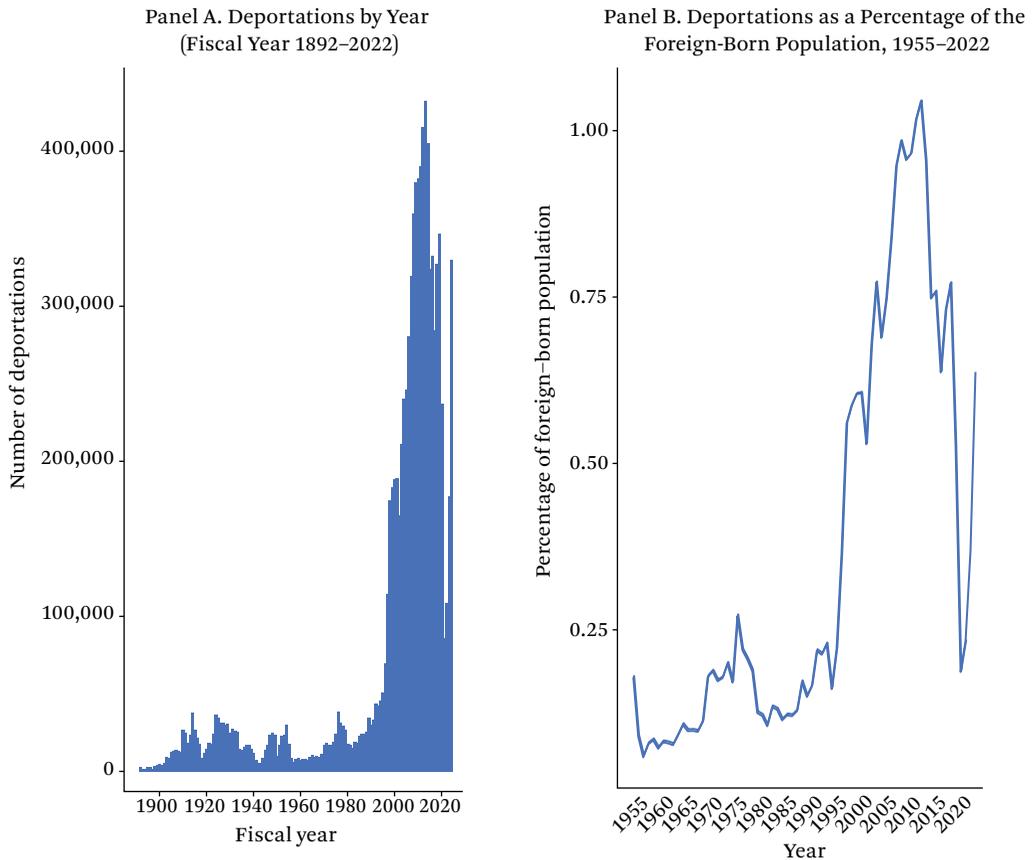
Source: Deportation data from Department of Homeland Security and foreign-born population data from US Census Bureau.

of the foreign-born population from 1955 to 2022 (panel B). Panel A shows that around 80 percent of all deportations have taken place since the mid-1990s.[1] Panel B shows that at the peak of mass deportations, over 1 percent of the total foreign-born population in the US was deported each year.

Deportation is often framed as a singular event that happens to individuals. We conceptualize deportation as a system that encompasses premigration, within-US, and post-deportation contexts and outcomes. Regarding premigration contexts, for many immigrants, the potential for exposure to the deportation system starts even before an immigrants' journey to the United States, depending on their access to paths to legal entry, which themselves are shaped by political and economic structural forces. Within-US refers to the experiences of migrants and their families and communities in the context of US immigration laws, policies, and enforcement patterns. Post-deportation outcomes encompass the experiences of deported people and of de facto

1. This number does not include removals by US Customs and Border Protection, which made over 9.4 million arrests between 2008 and 2022 (Transactional Records Access Clearinghouse 2022). It also does not include voluntary removals, whereby eligible migrants placed in removal proceedings can leave the US on their own within a specified period, instead of being formally removed (Goodman 2020). Since the United States began reporting voluntary removals in 1927, over 49 million individuals have left via voluntary removal status.

deportees who are not themselves directly expelled but leave with the deported person, along with social, economic, and political responses to deportation and deported peoples. Deportation can also lead to decisions to return to the United States in an irregular status, thus restarting the deportation system cycle with an additional layer of vulnerability. Our conceptualization of deportation as a system furthers the theorization and documentation of the direct and indirect impacts of the deportation system and its aftermath.

This article begins by providing additional background on the size, scope, history, and political context of US deportation policy. We then expand on the deportation system as a framework for understanding the vast and multifaceted impacts of US immigration laws and law enforcement, as well as broadly describe the empirical underpinnings of this framework. We conclude with a brief description of the methodological challenges facing researchers studying the deportation system, specifically issues related to data access and transparency. Finally, we preview the contributions of the articles in this issue.

THE DEPORTATION SYSTEM IN CONTEXT

The United States has a long history of forcibly removing noncitizens (Goodman 2020). The Alien and Sedition Acts of 1798 first granted presidential power to detain and deport noncitizens, and the 1891 Immigration Act solidified federal control over immigration laws. The Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 provided the gatekeeping architecture that characterizes most of contemporary US deportation policy by reinforcing restricted access to citizenship while establishing "new bureaucracies, modes, and technologies of immigration regulation," such as passports, residence documents, and regulations surrounding unauthorized immigration and deportation (Lee 2006). Throughout the twentieth century, the US engaged in several high-profile deportation efforts, including massive repatriation and deportation efforts in the 1930s and the infamous Operation Wetback in 1954. These efforts explicitly targeted Mexican immigrants together with Mexican American citizens, collec-

tively resulting in the removal of millions of people, and caused significant economic and social harm.

Though deportation has long been a feature of US immigration policy, as noted previously, 80 percent of all deportations have occurred since the mid-1990s. This exponential rise in modern-day mass deportation was enabled and facilitated by what scholars often refer to as "crimmigration" (Stumpf 2006)—the merging of some of the most punitive aspects of US criminal and immigration laws. One consequential feature of modern-day mass deportation, enabled by crimmigration, is the deputization of state and local law enforcement agencies to engage in federal immigration law enforcement. However, mass deportation is also enabled by policies that limit access to lawful pathways to the United States, including for asylum seekers and others fleeing economic, political, or social conditions.

We now describe the evolution of these crimmigration measures, beginning in the 1980s and spanning Republican and Democratic administrations. In response to illegal drug use and drug trafficking, the Ronald Reagan administration implemented the Anti-Drug Abuse Acts of 1986 (ADAA I) and 1988 (ADAA II). ADAA I laid the groundwork for local law enforcement to share information with immigration officials regarding immigrants who had been arrested or convicted of drug offenses. In turn, immigration officials could issue detainers—requests to local law enforcement to detain immigrants until immigration authorities can assume custody. ADAA II went further still, inserting into immigration law for the first time the notion of aggravated felonies, a special class of offenses defined only in US immigration law that carry harsh immigration consequences. In contrast to their name, such crimes do not have to be aggravated or felonies, and while ADAA II initially focused on drug-related crimes, the definition has grown to include "many nonviolent and seemingly minor offenses" such as theft, failing to appear in court, simple battery, and filing a false tax return (American Immigration Council 2021).

The Reagan administration also implemented the Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) in 1986. While IRCA is often cited for

its amnesty provisions, resulting in the legalization of nearly three million undocumented immigrants and their family members, it also codified into law mechanisms wherein immigration officials can sanction employers suspected of employing undocumented workers. These sanctions permitted the use of worksite enforcement actions such as workplace raids. While workplace raids have historically contributed only a fraction of overall apprehensions, they invoke fear and turmoil in immigration communities, which we describe further later.

With the crimmigration foundation laid in the 1980s, the 1990s saw a vast expansion of the US deportation system. This was enabled by changes to US immigration laws under the Bill Clinton administration that dramatically expanded immigration law enforcement and collaboration between federal and local law enforcement (codified in ADAA I), expanded the categories of deportable offenses, made deportability for such offenses retroactive, limited previously existing protections from removal, and limited due process protections for noncitizens in deportation proceedings (Patler and Golash-Boza 2017). The Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996 (hereafter IIRIRA) was one of the most consequential policies. Most notably, IIRIRA added Section 287(g) to the Immigration and Nationality Act, which established Memoranda of Agreement, hereafter referred to as 287(g) agreements, authorizing immigration officials to delegate some of their apprehension and detention functions to state and local law enforcement officers, effectively converting police officers into de facto immigration officers (Armenta 2017). IIRIRA also made several other changes that facilitated mass deportation such as implementing the process of expedited removal, which permits immigration officials to deport individuals quickly and without an appearance before an immigration judge (American Immigration Council 2023).

By the start of the twenty-first century, the crimmigration framework was thoroughly embedded in law. The George W. Bush administration further reinforced the criminalization of immigration following the events of Septem-

ber 11, 2001, by creating the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to oversee all immigration legal and enforcement matters, which were previously spread across the Departments of Justice, Labor, and the Treasury. Importantly, the Homeland Security Act created ICE to enforce immigration law and codified the immigration courts (the Executive Office for Immigration Review, or EOIR) under the Department of Justice. The use of 287(g) agreements and workplace raids also proliferated after the formation of DHS (see Peacock 2025, this issue). The George W. Bush administration also dramatically expanded large-scale removals by introducing Operation Streamline in 2005, wherein immigration courts can quickly prosecute and deport large numbers of undocumented migrants, often in groups of eighty or more.

Deportations accelerated during the first and second Barack Obama administrations through heavy reliance on 287(g) agreements between local police and ICE, as well as the expansion of expedited removal at the US-Mexico border. The Obama administration also introduced the Consequence Delivery System (CDS), designed as a program to deter migration at the southern border by allowing US Customs and Border Protection (CBP) to apply various consequences to migrants, depending on their previous migration history (Capps et al. 2017). Many CDS actions resulted in detention, which made it possible for families to be separated at the border, including children from their parents, wives from husbands, and so on. This became a large-scale problem during the Obama administration as family units increased from 3 percent to 14 percent of apprehensions from FY2013 to FY2014, and by FY2016, children and family groups together accounted for a third of the total (137,000 out of 409,000 cases) (Capps et al. 2017). The child separation policies that would become a hallmark of the Donald Trump administration (see Law 2025, this issue) thus had roots in the CDS program.

The Obama administration, however, also implemented changes in how deportations should be prioritized. In 2011, ICE Director John Morton articulated a new enforcement strategy directing ICE officers to consider a number of factors before acting on a removal

order, including an immigrant's ties to the United States and the severity of an immigrant's criminal convictions (Morton 2011). The Obama administration continued its focus on criminality by introducing the Secure Communities program in 2008, which fomented the massive expansion of federal-local entanglement enabled under 287(g) by allowing data-sharing between federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies. Secure Communities was so widespread that so-called sanctuary jurisdictions, in which local law enforcement officials are generally not permitted to execute the functions of DHS, proliferated in part as a response (Collingwood and Gonzalez O'Brien 2019).

By the end of the second Obama administration, Secure Communities was largely phased out, in part because of opposition and organizing from immigrant communities. However, the apparatus within DHS to implement mass deportation remained in place through 287(g) and the Priority Enforcement Program (PEP), introduced in 2014 to prioritize individuals convicted of felonies or multiple misdemeanors or with existing deportation orders (American Immigration Council 2017).

Thus, when Trump assumed office in 2017, among his very first acts as president was to re-implement 287(g) agreements and Secure Communities. In total, the first Trump administration took 1,296 actions on immigration, nearly all targeted at limiting the admission of immigrants and refugees to the United States or restricting the rights of immigrants already living here (Immigration Policy Tracking Project 2025). Most actions were issued by executive branch agencies such as DHS and EOIR, among others, or as presidential executive orders, thus bypassing the legislative process. Notably, Executive Order 13768 eliminated all priorities for immigration enforcement, explicitly making mass deportation the end goal. Further, in May 2018, Attorney General Jeff Sessions initiated the policy of family separation, whereby children and adults in family units apprehended at the border were intentionally separated (see Law 2025, this issue).

Of the nearly 1,300 Trump-era actions on immigration, about 680 remained in place during the Joe Biden administration, which faced considerable pressure to further restrict entry as an unprecedented number of asylum seekers arrived at the southern border of the US. For example, while the Trump administration issued the March 20, 2020, order implementing the COVID-19-era policy of Title 42,[2] under which migrants or asylum seekers apprehended at the border were immediately returned to Mexico, the Biden administration kept this policy in place until May 2023, when the COVID-19 emergency declaration formally ended. Ultimately, Title 42 resulted in 2.8 million expulsions across the first Trump and Biden administrations (Long 2023).

The Biden administration also enacted several other immigration policies that enabled deportation, most notably affecting asylum seekers. In 2024, Biden reenforced a 2018 Executive Order disallowing any asylum claims made outside of an official port of entry. Also in 2024, President Biden issued an executive order severely restricting asylum by tethering the number of asylum seekers to a formula based on DHS records of migrant apprehensions.[3] This order fundamentally changed the process by which asylum claims could be made, thus massively slowing entry of asylum seekers, creating an immense backlog of asylum seekers on the border, and likely increasing the undocumented population by limiting the grounds for legal entry (Chishti et al. 2024). After running on a platform of anti-immigrant messaging, Trump returned to the presidency in January 2025. From the first day in office, the Trump administration immediately began to implement draconian immigration enforcement actions to remove immigrants from the United States, with the highest price tag in US history: On July 4,

2. Title 42 refers to the 42 U.S.C. § 265, a section of the Public Health Service Act.

3. Under the order, if DHS encountered a daily average of more than 2,500 people between ports of entry during a seven-day period, entry of anyone without a CBP One appointment—including individuals eligible for asylum—would be denied. CBP One was a phone application implemented by the Biden administration to allow migrants to schedule asylum screenings from outside the United States.

2025, Trump signed into law H.R. 1 (referred to as the "One Big Beautiful Bill"), which allocated a staggering $171 billion to DHS, up from $65 billion in 2025 (American Immigration Council 2025). As of October 13, 2025, the Trump administration had taken 477 actions on immigration, nearly all geared at increasing deportations, restricting admissions, and limiting immigrants' rights (Immigration Policy Tracking Project 2025). Perhaps most consequentially, the administration has dramatically expanded the scope of the 287(g) program to further allow state and local law enforcement agents to engage in immigration enforcement activities that channel noncitizens into the deportation pipeline. While in January 2025, at the end of the Biden administration, ICE had 135 287(g) agreements in place, as of September 11, 2025, a staggering 1,000 agreements were in place across forty-two states (Kocher 2025a).

The second Trump administration has also taken a series of actions to subject more people to deportation and make deportations easier, including by limiting admissions (through, for example, travel bans), revoking valid visas (for example, from international students and faculty and those with Temporary Protected Status), and cancelling funding for legal services for unaccompanied minor children and people with severe cognitive disorders in immigration court. The Trump administration also seeks to end birthright citizenship for any child without at least one lawful permanent resident or US citizen parent, which experts estimate "would strip 4.74 million U.S.-born children of citizenship over the next two decades, with impacted children representing more than one in every 18 (5.7%) U.S. births over that period" (Heiges-Goepfert et al. 2025, 2). The administration has also declared a national emergency on the southern border and invoked the very rarely used Alien Enemies Act of 1798 to give itself wider latitude to detain and deport individuals without due process, including 238 Venezuelans sent to El Salvador's Center for the Confinement of Terrorism (CECOT) prison in March 2025. Finally, President Trump also signed into law the Laken Riley Act (passed by Congress under the Biden administration), which initiates deportation proceedings for immigrants who are accused of low-level crimes like shoplifting and gives states broad authority to sue the federal government over immigration outcomes in their jurisdictions.

Taken together, these actions, if fully implemented, will almost surely result in the massive growth of the US undocumented (and thus, deportable) population, so long as economic and political conditions in sending countries remain unchanged and the US continues to rely on immigrant labor in key industries. For example, the repeal of birthright citizenship would increase the undocumented population by an additional 2.7 million by 2045 and 5.4 million by 2075 (Van Hook et al. 2025). Finally, while many of the administration's executive orders and actions have been challenged in the courts, with federal judges issuing a series of national injunctions, the US Supreme Court has permitted the Trump administration to proceed with many of its efforts while the cases advance through the courts, and the final outcome of these proceedings may still be years away.

The specter of future enforcement actions proposed by the Trump administration remains front and center in public debate. This includes, for example, calls to deport immigrants to Libyan prisons (despite that country having a Level Four travel advisory for US citizens), punish sanctuary jurisdictions, reopen federal prisons for immigrant detention, and continue the mass apprehension and detention of immigrants, including those lawfully present in the US. Fear and outrage have spread through communities across the US following highly publicized coverage of immigrants being apprehended on the streets or pulled from their cars by masked (and often plainclothes) agents, often in front of screaming children or families (Lavietes 2025; Kile 2025), and of young, US citizen children, including at least one four-year-old suffering from Stage Four cancer, being removed from the US alongside their parents (Lopez and Das 2025). These actions and threats underscore the need for a much deeper understanding of the implications of the deportation system; this is the contribution of this issue.

CONCEPTUALIZING THE DEPORTATION SYSTEM

We conceptualize deportation in broad terms, as a system with an often circular nature that encompasses premigration, within-US, and post-deportation outcomes, including the potential for remigration to the United States. In this subsection, we expand on the underpinnings of this conceptualization.

How Premigration Contexts Channel Migrants into the Deportation System

Migration to the US is driven by a complex set of structural push and pull factors, including economic and political conditions in sending and receiving countries. US immigration laws specify discrete options for legal admission to the United States and relief from removal, such as through a direct family tie, employment, or humanitarian considerations. These categories—and their corresponding visa allotments, in which no country can account for more than 7 percent of visas in any given year, irrespective of demand—often exist regardless of the interconnected political, social, economic, and environmental realities of sending countries or the United States. This leads to differential and unequal paths to legal status, thereby creating disparate exposure to the deportation system, often stratified by racialized group and class (Martínez 2022).

Contemporary mass migration to the US from Mexico provides one notorious example of the mismatch between immigration law and migration realities that leads to differential exposure to deportation. Beginning in 1942, in response to labor shortages in the agricultural industry, the US government recruited and provided temporary visas for laborers from Mexico through the Bracero program. At its height, this program recruited up to 450,000 workers per year and became a structural feature of the US and Mexican economies (Massey et al. 2002). However, the Bracero program ended abruptly at the end of 1964, followed ten months later by Congress' passage of the Hart-Cellar Act, which

created, for the first time, quotas on migration from the Western Hemisphere. Thus, with the Bracero program's termination and no similarly sized visa allocation in place, "undocumented migration was the only possible outlet" for the ongoing structural reliance on migration in Mexico and the United States (Massey et al. 2002, 41). Unsurprisingly, the population of undocumented Mexican immigrants in the United States ballooned after 1965.

To the present day, most Mexican nationals who do not have direct family ties in the United States have few options to migrate to the US legally.[4] This reality, combined with over a century of binational economic reliance on Mexican labor in the United States, increases the likelihood of Mexican migration without authorization, thereby heightening vulnerability to the deportation system. Certain geographic areas of Mexico, namely those home to indigenous Mexicans, are even less likely to have access to visas to legally enter the United States, creating further disparities in the experiences of migrant illegality (Asad and Hwang 2018; Herrera 2016) and subsequent deportability. Despite intensive funding to boost US border security, Mexican undocumented migration is driven predominantly by economic factors; indeed, increased border enforcement has led to more (not less) undocumented migration (Massey et al. 2016), and the Mexican undocumented population has only begun shrinking since the mid-to-late 2000s in response to the US recession and to economic and demographic shifts in Mexico (Masferrer et al. 2025).

Central American migration provides another example of how US politics and policies create unequal paths to (un)documented immigration status and thus potential exposure to deportation. Large-scale migration from Central America began after 1979 following the US government's intervention in the revolution in Nicaragua, as well as its support of right-wing regimes in Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras. Fleeing political conflict, violence, and related economic disruptions, many mi-

4. Even individuals with family ties can often wait decades for visa processing owing to the notorious visa backlog. For example, as of August 2025, Mexican nationals who are married sons or daughters of US citizens and are being processed for a visa have been waiting since February 2001 (nearly twenty-five years); see https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/legal/visa-law0/visa-bulletin/2025/visa-bulletin-for-august-2025.html.

grants from these four countries entered the US without authorization or overstayed tourist visas. However, while the 1997 Nicaraguan Adjustment and Central American Relief Act (NACARA) allowed Nicaraguans to proactively apply for legal permanent residence, Salvadorans and Guatemalans were only authorized to apply for a suspension of deportation or cancellation of removal, that is, not legal permanent residence, and only defensively, and Hondurans were not covered at all. Consequently, Nicaraguan immigrants "disappear[ed] from the undocumented population," while migrants from El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras remained undocumented or "languished in . . . the legal limbo of temporary protected status." (Massey et al. 2014, 1032). As of 2021, around 63 percent of Salvadorans (800,000 of 1,300,000), 70 percent of Guatemalans (700,000 of 1,000,000), and 75 percent of Hondurans (525,000 of 700,000) living in the US were present without authorization, up from 55 percent, 63 percent, and 73 percent, respectively, in 2010 (Passel and Krogstad 2024; Massey et al. 2014; Moslimani et al. 2023). As the cases of Mexican and Central American migration show, the political relationship between the US and sending countries shapes migrants' premigration circumstances and access to legal status, with significant consequences for subsequent exposure to the deportation system (see also Asad 2024; Canizales 2024).

Inequities in exposure to the deportation system, even prior to migration, are reinforced through regulations surrounding the manner of entry to the US, in which consequential distinctions exist between individuals who enter the US without inspection and those who enter the US legally and overstay visas. Under current US immigration law, to eventually legalize status, individuals who entered without inspection must leave the country and apply to be lawfully admitted, while visa overstayers do not have to leave the US because they were at one point lawfully admitted. Moreover, all applicants for lawful admission must prove that they do not meet any grounds of inadmissibility, yet one such factor is a history of unlawful presence in the United States. Furthermore, IIRIRA created automatic and nondiscretionary three- and ten-year bars for admission based on time in unlawful status, which are triggered precisely when a person leaves and applies to come back to the United States. As such, the reentry bars almost exclusively apply to border crossers and not to visa overstayers.

Reentry bars have consequences, for example, for spouses of US citizens who are otherwise eligible for permanent residency through marriage or other family petitions but face reentry bars owing to initially entering the US without inspection (American Immigration Council 2024). In one example, Mexican national Emma Sanchez entered the United States without authorization in 2000, where she soon met and married Michael Paulsen, a US citizen and Marine veteran (Humanizing Deportation 2019, 2020). The couple had three children together and applied to adjust Emma's status through their marriage. However, "immigration laws stipulated that applicants seeking legal status must return to their country of origin [and reenter lawfully] . . . but once an applicant who had been living in the United States without permission left the country, they were automatically barred from re-entering" (Sanchez 2016). This bar kept Emma and Michael separated for over a decade, forcing Emma to miss important milestones in her children's lives and even keeping her from her husband during a medical emergency. Cases like Emma's prompted the Biden administration to introduce in August 2024 the Parole in Place (PIP) program, which would have allowed eligible spouses to remain in the United States while their applications are processed, had it not been stopped by a court.

Importantly, because working-class immigrants from Mexico and Central America are much more likely to have entered the US without inspection than other undocumented people, they are disproportionately exposed to reentry bars. In this way, US immigration laws reinforce differential exposure to the deportation system among the world's migrant population by racialized group and class. The reentry bars also prevent many people from legally returning to the United States following deportation, for example, to reunify with family (see also Vargas Valle et al. 2022; Valdivia 2025, this issue).

Within-US Consequences of the Deportation System

The previous section established the differential paths to exposure to the deportation system, which can begin even prior to migration. We now turn to the implications of the deportation system for immigrants and their communities in the United States. We begin by reviewing the demographic portrait of deported immigrants, focusing on false narratives of immigrants as criminals which are promoted by political elites and other issue entrepreneurs. We then provide a summary of the literature on the outcomes of deportation for individuals, families, and communities, in addition to the economy, US politics, and political outcomes.

The Myth of Immigrant Criminality

Political rhetoric about immigration commonly relies on false narratives of immigrant criminality (Ferris and Mohamed 2018; Albertson and Gadarian 2015; Figueroa-Caballero and Mastro 2018). Yet despite the ubiquity of such narratives, the reality is starkly different: Immigrants in general, and undocumented immigrants in particular, have lower offending rates than US citizens overall (Light 2024). Furthermore, as more immigrants move to US cities, violent crime rates decrease (Ousey and Kubrin 2009). In addition, most deported people have committed no serious criminal infraction (Amuedo-Dorantes et al. 2019), and deportation does not reduce violent crime rates (Hines and Peri 2019). As of August 2025, over 70 percent of immigrants detained by ICE (41,822/59,380) had no criminal record (Transactional Records Access Clearinghouse 2025). With respect to deportation, figure 2 shows the number of individuals deported between 2003 and 2024 by ICE's criminal infraction classification system. This figure makes clear that most deported individuals either have no criminal conviction or have minor (level 3) convictions.

Despite being false, immigrant criminality narratives have been pervasively reinforced by political elites. For example, in October 2020, just days before the US presidential election, President Trump issued an executive order making November 1 a "National Day of Remembrance for Americans Killed by Illegal Aliens." Such narratives are persistent and reemerged in the 2024 US presidential election campaign, with presidential candidate Trump and his running mate frequently linking violent immigrant criminality to lurid and vivid portrayals of victims while making false claims about the prevalence of violent criminality among immigrants (Brennan 2024), including false and racialized claims about Haitian immigrants in Ohio (Levien 2024), and repeatedly promising to implement "the largest deportation [program] in the history of our country" (Paquette and Brulliard 2024). After his victory in the 2024 election, the Trump administration escalated criminality narratives, using them to justify, for example, the invocation of the Alien Enemies Act to facilitate mass deportation without due process.

In spite of vast evidence against it, the narrative of immigrant criminality has induced anxiety toward, and fear of, immigrants (see also, Albertson and Gadarian 2015; Brader et al. 2008; Branton et al. 2011; Ferris and Mohamed 2018; Ramírez and Peterson 2020). Experimental studies demonstrate that when White Americans are exposed to immigrant criminality narratives, their support for punitive policies, harsher legal sentencing, and deportation significantly increases (see also, Brader et al. 2008; Figueroa-Caballero and Mastro 2018). Similarly, studies using observational data show that in geographic contexts where deportation rates are high, White Americans demonstrate increased trust in government compared to those in low-removal contexts (Rocha et al. 2015). This literature illustrates how myths about immigrant criminality, spread by political elites, can sway public opinion, thus increasing support for even more punitive deportation policies spearheaded by the very same political elites.

Consequences of the Deportation System for Individuals, Families, and Communities

The vast majority of deported people are men from Latin America and the Caribbean, leading scholars to conceptualize deportation as a gendered and racialized system that disproportionately impacts non-White families and communities in the United States (Golash-Boza and Hondagneu-Sotelo 2013; Maltby et al. 2020; Martínez 2022; Ngai 2004). The impacts

Figure 2. Most Deportations Are of Individuals with No Criminal Convictions or Minor Criminal Convictions
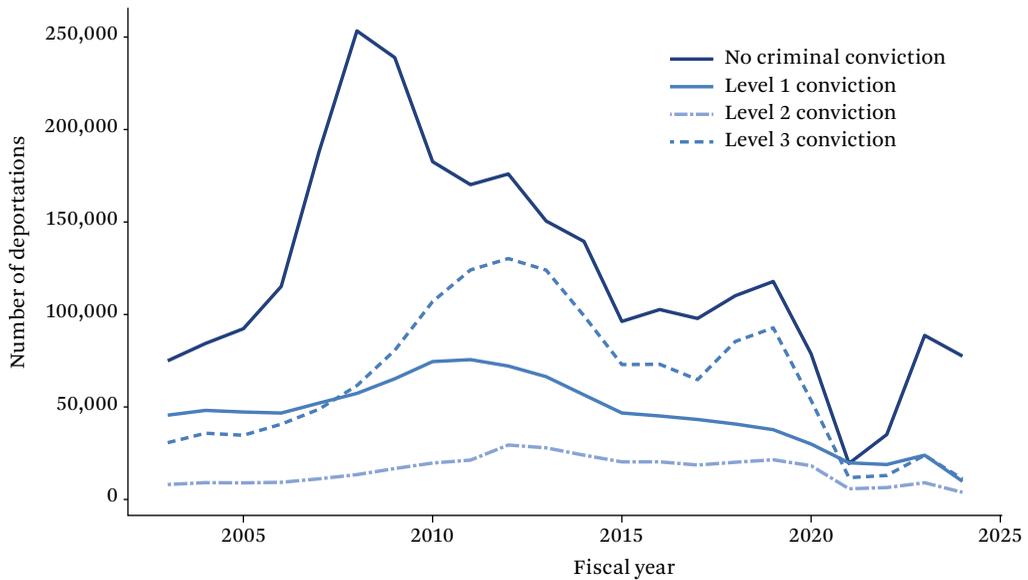
Source: Authors' calculation based on Transactional Records Access Clearinghouse, https://tracreports .org/phptools/immigration/remove/.
Note: ICE identifies three levels of criminal infractions. Level 1 convictions are the most serious, including violent crimes. Level 2 infractions are serious but less serious than level 1 convictions. Level 3 convictions are very minor infractions (for example, driving with a broken taillight or unlawful reentry into the United States).

of the deportation system extend far beyond individual deported people: Eleven to twelve million undocumented immigrants reside in the United States as of 2023. Most of them are in the labor force and share households with 6.6 million US citizens, including 5.7 million US citizen children (Warren and Kerwin 2017, 2024).

An important legal feature also characterizes US deportation policy. Unlike criminal law, immigration law is administrative in nature and therefore lacks several of the procedural safeguards that exist in the criminal legal system, such as the right to government-appointed counsel and a speedy trial. For this reason, advocates have referred to the immigration detention system as "indefinite imprisonment without trial" (Arulanantham 2022). In addition, the Supreme Court of the United States, relying on case law from the era of Chinese Exclusion, has repeatedly ruled that deportation is not a punishment, but rather an administrative process

of returning to their home countries noncitizens who are deemed inadmissible to the United States. Many observers refute the definition of deportation as non-punishment, especially given the harsh consequences of removal as experienced by the very individuals subject to the actions (Goodman 2020; Reiter and Coutin 2017; Slack 2019), the compounded vulnerability for children and families of deported people (Patler and Gonzalez 2021; Dreby 2015), and the harms to the US economy (East et al. 2023; East and Velasquez 2025).

While undocumented status creates unique vulnerability to deportation, any noncitizen can be deported if found in violation of US immigration laws. This includes lawful permanent residents (LPRs), who make up one in ten deported people each year (Immigration Policy Center 2010). Many LPRs are unaware that their status, despite its nominal permanence, does not shield them from deportation; others face linguistic, financial, or other barriers to naturaliza-

tion that would protect them from deportation. However, as noncitizens, they remain subject to grounds of inadmissibility that trigger deportation, including the retroactive penalties imposed by IIRIRA. This has been the case, for example, for thousands of refugees from Southeast Asia who were born in refugee camps and brought to the United States as young children, adjusted their status to LPR, and later had contact with the criminal legal system with little or no legal advice as to the immigration consequences of various plea bargains (Southeast Asia Resource Action Center and American University Washington College of Law Immigrant Justice Clinic 2018). Without the protections of naturalization, many such individuals end up in deportation proceedings. LPRs also tend to spend the longest periods of time detained by ICE as their removal cases proceed (Transactional Records Access Clearinghouse 2013).

As the deportation system has expanded, research on its consequences has proliferated. This body of work provides ample evidence of the deportation system's harmful direct, indirect, spillover,[5] and intergenerational impacts on socioeconomic, political, and health and well-being outcomes (see, Amuedo-Dorantes and Lopez 2017; Barreto et al. 2009; East et al. 2023; Lopez 2019; Perreira and Pedroza 2019; Wong et al. 2020). For example, in contexts where mass removals are higher, children of immigrants experience poorer educational outcomes (Amuedo-Dorantes and Lopez 2017; Weber 2022) and US-born individuals experience decreased employment and wages (East et al. 2023). Mass deportation programs such as Secure Communities have been linked to increased incidence of adverse infant health outcomes, such as low birth weight among infants born to foreign-born Latina mothers, through mechanisms such as increased maternal stress and lack of adequate prenatal care due to chilling effects—at an estimated annual cost of nearly $1.6 billion (Vu 2023; see also Hong et al. 2025, this issue).

Immigration law enforcement tactics like large-scale immigration raids have also been linked to deleterious outcomes in Latino communities, including higher levels of enforcement stress and lower self-rated health (Lopez et al. 2017; Lopez 2019), increased risk of low birth weight among infants (Novak et al. 2017), and reduced enrollment in Head Start programs (Santillano et al. 2020). Raids are also linked to declines in student achievement, reduced educational and employment paths, increased school absences and exclusionary disciplinary actions, diagnoses of substance use disorder and depression, increased incidents of self-harm, and suicide attempts or ideation, among children of immigrants (Heinrich et al. 2022; Bennett et al. 2025, this issue; Kirksey and Sattin-Bajaj 2025, this issue).

Even the threat and possibility of deportation, or what Nicholas De Genova calls "deportability," (2002, see also De Genova and Peutz 2010) can have profound negative impacts on health and well-being, leading to worsening health in contexts of higher deportation threat (Gemmill et al. 2019: Jones et al. 2021; Vargas and Ybarra 2017). The notion of deportability is important: Even in the current era, most immigrants do not face imminent deportation, but millions live in spaces of deportability, where the threat of deportation can undergird daily life (Asad 2024). In contrast, decreasing deportation threat—for example, through the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program—can lead to improved health, both for directly impacted individuals and for their families (Hainmueller et al. 2017; Venkataramani et al. 2017; Patler and Pirtle 2018; Patler et al. 2021; Hamilton et al. 2021; Patler et al. 2019). In addition to its deleterious impacts to health and well-being, the deportation system also has significant negative effects on the US economy, an issue we consider next.

Consequences of the Deportation System for the US Economy

Deportation harms the US economy in several ways, despite common political arguments to the contrary. This is true historically and today. For example, the mass repatriation of Mexicans in the 1930s has been causally linked to reduced employment and occupational down-

5. Following Asad Asad and Mathew Clair (2018), we define spillover as the impacts of the deportation system on people, communities, and institutions that are not the direct targets of immigration law enforcement.

grading of US-born workers (Lee et al. 2022). Research on the more recent era of mass deportation has focused on the Secure Communities program, the staggered rollout of which allows for causal research designs to measure impact. This growing body of research shows that Secure Communities has had negative impacts on both the immigrant and US-born labor force. The Secure Communities program decreased the employment of undocumented immigrants but also decreased employment and hourly wages among US-born individuals, likely given the important, complementary roles that undocumented workers play in the US economy (East et al. 2023; Mayda and Peri 2017). Secure Communities also reduced the labor supply of college-educated US-born mothers with young children by increasing the cost of outsourcing household production to undocumented immigrants, such as caregiving and other services (East and Velásquez 2025). Secure Communities has also been linked to reductions in self-employment rates across the country and to negative impacts on the income of the self-employed, with stronger effects among White and male individuals and workers in the manufacturing and service sectors (García and Gutiérrez-Li 2023).

Deportation also harms the economy by increasing poverty and economic hardship in immigrant and US citizen communities, especially among Latinos. Secure Communities led to reduced enrollment in federal safety-net programs such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) among Hispanic-headed citizen households, likely owing to fear of deportation of family members, rather than stigma or lack of information about benefits (Alsan and Yang 2024).

Taken together, this research shows that mass deportation programs like Secure Communities have significant negative ramifications for various sectors of the US economy. In addition, existing economic research makes clear that labor market outcomes improve in the context of reduced exposure to deportability, for example, through legalization programs (Amuedo-Dorantes et al. 2007; Lozano and Sorensen 2011).

Consequences of the Deportation System for Political Outcomes

Deportation and the threat of deportation also significantly impact political outcomes and attitudes. An expanding body of work examines the relationship between immigration enforcement and political attitudes and behaviors. For example, Hannah Walker and colleagues (2020) examined whether proximal contact with immigration enforcement influences protest activity and found a significant positive association between contact with immigration enforcement and participation in protest activities among White and Asian survey respondents. Among Black and Latino respondents, the willingness to participate in protests was high regardless of proximal contact. In a similar vein, Ariel White (2016) found that voter turnout rates among Latinos residing in Secure Communities locations significantly increased after exposure to the program. She argues that, with the increased threat of removal aimed at Latinos, Latino activist groups successfully mobilized Latino voters in these locations.

Other research has examined how having social ties with undocumented immigrants and deported people impacts political judgment and behavior. Walker and colleagues (2019) demonstrate that among Latinos, close ties to individuals threatened with detention or deportation have a complex impact on political behavior: In the context of detention or deportation threat of a close friend or family member, Latinos may disengage from political institutions out of fear they may expose their friend or family member (see also Patler and Gonzalez 2021). However, other forms of civic engagement, such as participating in collective action efforts like signing petitions, attending rallies, and other related efforts, significantly increase among those with close ties to threatened individuals. Marcel Roman and colleagues (2022) similarly show that ties to undocumented immigrants led to an increase in protest activities (see also Baretto et al. 2009).

More generally, higher rates of exposure to detentions and deportations are associated with a variety of political outcomes and attitudes. Elizabeth Maltby and colleagues (2020) examined the relationship between Latinos' proximity to locations experiencing large-scale deporta-

tion and "linked fate"—the belief that one's future is dependent on the group's future. They found that among native-born Latinos, feelings of linked fate were substantially higher for those exposed to high-level immigration enforcement, compared to those not exposed to such environments, providing evidence that threatening enforcement environments have spillover effects on individuals ostensibly shielded from enforcement actions (that is, US-born) but who have ties to co-ethnics who are directly impacted by enforcement actions. Similarly, in a survey experiment, Bradford Jones and colleagues (2021) demonstrated that exposure to explicit details of Trump's 2016 immigration agenda significantly increased deportation anxiety among foreign-born and US citizen Latinos.

Deportation has also been linked to political trust. Using survey data from Texas, Rene Rocha and colleagues (2015) considered the differential effects of residing within and outside locations involved in the Secure Communities program. They found that among Latinos, exposure to Secure Communities and the subsequent increases in deportations led to significant decreases in trust in government as well as endorsement of political efficacy—the belief that individuals have agency in making political change. However, among White survey respondents, high deportation exposure had the opposite effect, wherein White respondents reported a significantly higher level of trust in government and political efficacy compared to Whites not exposed to Secure Communities immigration action.

Variation in immigration policies from restrictive to accommodating can also have an impact on political behavior. Angela García (2021) leveraged variation in local immigration laws in Southern California towns and cities and found that the nature of immigration policy had divergent effects on behavior. For Mexican immigrants residing in places with restrictive local immigration policies, individuals became more vigilant and informed about immigration enforcement but were less politically engaged compared to Mexican immigrants in more accommodating locations. Taken together, research on the political implications of deportation and immigration policies has wide-ranging, highly variable outcomes.

Post-Deportation Outcomes

We have briefly reviewed the extensive impacts of deportation on social, economic, and political outcomes in the United States. The question of what happens after deportation is also important—and understudied. Indeed, while the deporting country (for example, the United States) may turn its back on expelled individuals, the afterlife of mass deportation extends far beyond the deportation itself (Andrews and the Students of the Mexican Migrants Field Research Program 2023). For many families, deportation signifies permanent or long-term family separation, with particularly detrimental impacts for children who remain in the US, including harms to health, behavior, material hardship, and academic outcomes (Martinez-Donate et al. 2024).

The research on post-deportation outcomes broadly takes four paths. One body of research examines the economic, social, and political impacts of mass deportation on countries of origin. These studies, predominantly focused on deportation from the US to Mexico and El Salvador, analyze the mostly detrimental impacts of mass deportations on the economy (for example, firm behavior, wages, and employed deported people's experiences; Anderson 2015; Bandiera et al. 2023), children's educational opportunities (Sviatschi 2019), and violent crime rates (Rozo et al. 2020).

Another group of studies explores how states and institutional actors in countries of forced return structure the reintegration of deported individuals and their families, with policies ranging from criminalizing to ignoring to welcoming (Golash-Boza 2015; Hagan and Wassink 2020). Existing research also documents the challenging and multifaceted experiences of deported people who struggle to make ends meet and face stigma, prejudice, and discrimination in their countries of origin (Andrews and the Students of the Mexican Migrants Field Research Program 2023; Andrews and Khayar-Cámara 2020; Boehm 2016; Caldwell 2019; Dingeman 2017; Golash-Boza 2015; Hagan and Wassink 2020; Rivera Sánchez 2019; Masferrer et al. 2025). For instance, deported migrants often face high levels of precarity and stigma after deportation from the United States (Buckinx and Filindra 2015; Slack 2019; Masferrer et al. 2025).

Finally, a growing body of research focuses on questions of changing family configurations following deportation. When a family member is deported, mixed-status families must make difficult choices about whether and how to stay together, reunite in the country of origin, or return separately to the country of expulsion (Amuedo-Dorantes et al. 2015; Hamilton et al. 2023; Vargas Valle et al. 2022; see also Escamilla García and Cerón 2025, this issue; and Valdivia 2025, this issue). Children of deported people who leave the US with their parents—de facto deportees—also face social and institutional exclusion (Boehm 2016; Caldwell 2019; Dreby 2015; Hamilton et al. 2023; Hoffmann 2024; Zayas 2015; see also Hamilton et al. 2025, this issue).

While research increasingly addresses the post-deportation context, this body of research is still relatively smaller than the research focused on the pre-deportation and within-US components of the US deportation system. Even less is known about the rebooting of the deportation system among individuals who return to the US following deportation (Valdivia 2025, this issue).

THIS ISSUE

This introduction advances a conceptualization of deportation as a system spanning pre-migration, within-US, and post-deportation outcomes, which is often circular in nature. We have laid out the historic legal and political roots and contemporary consequences of US deportation policy (crimmigration), which has been a key issue across multiple presidential administrations. We then reviewed a multidisciplinary body of research on deportation with the goal of laying a foundation and setting a research agenda for the future. To that end, we now turn in greater depth to the contributions of this issue, which explores a wide range of impacts of the deportation system, including how the system functions and is perpetuated (Ian G. Peacock); the impact of US immigration enforcement on families, schooling, and social services uptake (Cora Bennett, Virginia Graves, and Benjamin Meadows; Youngijin Stephanie Hong, Marci Ybarra, and Angela S. García; J. Jacob Kirksey and Carolyn Sattin-Bajaj); political communication about immigration issues (Tina Law); the well-being of individuals who

reenter the United States following deportation (Carolina Valdivia); the impact of family composition on decisions to return to the United States following deportation (Ángel A. Escamilla García and Adriana M. Cerón; Erin R. Hamilton, Claudia Masferrer, Angelita Repetto, and Nicole Denier); and the impact of external shocks in immigrants' home countries on removals from the US (Agustina Laurito and Ashley N. Muchow). We briefly consider these contributions in the context of our conceptualization of the deportation system and discuss emergent themes in the articles.

Perpetuation and Growth of the Deportation System

As we have described, mass deportation is enabled primarily through the merging of the US immigration and criminal legal systems, including the dramatic expansion of 287(g) agreements. Ian G. Peacock analyzes the factors that led to the diffusion of 287(g) agreements across the country between 2002 and 2011. Using a difference-in-differences design with data recording county participation in public official associations (POAs), such as the National Sheriffs' Association (NSA) and the Major County Sheriffs of America (MCSA), Peacock generates three findings with tremendous importance for the current era. First, the NSA and MCSA had significant influence on counties' decisions to opt into 287(g) agreements. Second, opting in to a 287(g) agreement was a diffusion process wherein counties simply reused the language from previously opted-in counties' participation letters, thus spreading POA influence from one county to others. Third, the extent of this influence impacted the degree to which counties cooperated with ICE: Highly influenced counties increased their commitment to immigration enforcement by, among other things, devoting more jail space to ICE detainees and complying with ICE detainer requests at higher rates. Thus, this article not only documents how county involvement in 287(g) agreements occurred but also how participation proliferated across the country. Peacock's article provides important explanatory potential for the current rise of 287(g) agreements under the second Trump administration, which have also been enabled by state policies mandating par-

ticipation (or penalizing abstention), including in Florida, Virginia, and Texas.

Ultimately, Congress makes US immigration policy, but the executive branch has been increasingly empowered to influence its implementation. Tina Law explores how the dynamics between a strengthened executive branch and a sharply divided Congress influence the development of deportation policy. Using a policy feedback framework, which emphasizes the mutually reinforcing relationship between policies and political institutions, Law creates an original dataset and uses computational text analysis to analyze congressional responses on Twitter to the rollout and subsequent suspension of the Trump administration's 2018 family separation policy. The findings show that members of Congress from both parties respond selectively to executive actions on deportation, particularly when policies are perceived as politically untenable or unpopular. These patterns raise important questions about the balance of power in shaping deportation policy and the broader consequences for migration governance and democratic accountability.

Pre-Migration Experiences

While most of the articles in this issue address within-US or post-deportation contexts, Agustina Laurito and Ashley N. Muchow consider an increasingly relevant question facing migration scholars with important implications for the entire deportation system: measuring the impact of climate change on migration. The authors examine the impact of natural disasters in countries of origin (for example, storms, droughts, extended periods of high temperatures, floods, and other natural disasters) on US deportation rates of citizens from those countries. Using a causal research design, Laurito and Muchow find a significant increase in removals of immigrants from countries where disasters occurred in the period following the disaster, relative to the removal rate in the period prior to the disaster. The notion of premigration context is relevant in the two possible mechanisms that may explain this result. The first potential mechanism suggests the occurrence of catastrophic events would increase the propensity for migrants to irregularly migrate to the US, resulting in increased deportations.

The second potential mechanism suggests that changes in the behaviors of undocumented migrants from the country of the disaster who are already residing in the United States could impact exposure to deportation. The authors do not find strong evidence that natural disasters impact the decision to irregularly migrate (mechanism 1). Instead, they demonstrate increases in labor force participation among undocumented immigrants already residing in the US who may be seeking to generate income for remittances in the wake of natural disasters, in turn making more immigrants vulnerable to apprehensions and deportations, for example, through workplace raids or audits (mechanism 2). While the article does not address the post-deportation context, it stands to reason that if more individuals are deported from the US owing to downstream impacts of country-of-origin disasters, this could trigger a return to the United States in irregular and potentially more vulnerable statuses, thus rebooting the deportation system.

Within-US Consequences

Several of the contributions to this issue explore the relationship between immigration enforcement or the threat of enforcement and a variety of outcomes. Two articles consider how immigration enforcement influences academic achievement. Cora Bennett, Virginia Graves, and Benjamin Meadows analyze the impact of ICE enforcement actions at the school-district level. The authors merge data from Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests containing all ICE arrests over a ten-year period (2008–2018) for five southern states (Alabama, Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Tennessee) with Stanford Education Data Archive (SEDA) data on school achievement from every school district in those states. The analysis links immigration enforcement actions to a large and robust decrease in math and language arts achievement, suggesting that local communities experience enforcement actions as traumatic events.

J. Jacob Kirksey and Carolyn Sattin-Bajaj also consider the impacts of immigration enforcement on children's outcomes. Specifically, they document how immigration raids impact employment and education among Latinos

and English-language learners. Their article examines a 2018 ICE immigration raid at Long Trail LLC, a trailer manufacturing plant in North Texas, which resulted in 159 arrests affecting four nearby counties. Using a synthetic control design comparing pre-raid and post-raid outcomes, they find that applications to four-year higher education institutions significantly declined, college readiness scores and applications for college financial aid significantly declined, and employment rates significantly increased among legally vulnerable students following the raid. They attribute this latter change to the likely need for additional sources of income in the wake of increased deportations within the community.

While the preceding two articles address the negative downstream outcomes of the deportation system on educational outcomes, Youngjin Stephanie Hong, Marci Ybarra, and Angela S. García examine the everyday threat of a deportation on social safety net participation among families with young children. Using data from the California Health Interview Survey (CHIS) from 2008 to 2020, the authors examine the relationship between expanded deportations under the Secure Communities program and enrollment in social safety-net programs including SNAP; Medicaid; Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC); Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF); and Head Start and state preschool programs in California. They find that higher removal rates were negatively associated with children's enrollment in WIC, TANF, and Medicaid among likely undocumented mothers who had lived in the US for five years or less, relative to US-born mothers. Taken together, these three articles add to a growing literature documenting the spillover harms of immigration law enforcement on children of all ages, many of whom are US citizens, with potentially harmful ramifications for their long-term development and opportunities.

Post-Deportation Consequences

The final set of articles in this issue explores questions pertaining to post-deportation consequences and experiences, with an emphasis on the impacts of deportation on families. Ángel A. Escamilla García and Adriana M. Cerón

address an important question—the decision to return to the US after deportation—among a large and growing but vastly understudied population: Central American migrants. Relying on semi-structured interview data from Central Americans who were deported, as well as survey data from the 2014–2018 Survey of Migration in the Southern Border of Mexico (EMIF Sur), they find that deported Central Americans with existing family in the US (that is, a spouse, child[ren], or both) were significantly more likely to express intentions to return to the US compared to those without family in the US. Moreover, they demonstrate trauma and anxiety due to family separation as a potential key mechanism prompting the desire to return immediately to the US following deportation. The article underscores the powerful role of family in shaping migration decision-making, even after deportation.

While Escamilla García and Cerón explore the factors that can lead families to return to the United States even after deportation, Erin R. Hamilton, Claudia Masferrer, Angelita Repetto, and Nicole Denier consider the factors that cause the phenomenon of de facto deportees (family members who leave the country because another family member has been deported). While the US records individual deportations, it keeps no records of de facto deportees; the Mexican government has also failed to consistently measure this population. The novel analysis by Hamilton and colleagues provides the most up-to-date statistics on the number and demographic characteristics of de facto deportees in Mexico. Relying on analysis of Mexican census data, the authors conclude that more than eleven thousand individuals were de facto deportees in Mexico between 2015 and 2020, with a disproportionate number being children and women. The first of their kind, these findings underscore once again the importance of family to deported migrants, as well as the gendered nature of the US deportation system.

The final article in this issue, by Carolina Valdivia, considers post-deportation consequences in an interesting and original way. Analyzing seventy-one in-depth interviews, Valdivia zeroes in on the lives of deported individuals who subsequently reenter and reside in

the US, most frequently to reunite with family, thus rebooting the deportation system. She argues that while many immigrants in the US experience a high degree of vulnerability due to deportation threat, previously deported returnees and their families experience new and heightened levels of precarity, a condition she calls hyper-illegality. This understudied population is extremely vulnerable, given that US immigration policies are far more punitive for individuals who have previously been deported (for example, reentry after deportation is a criminal offense, not a misdemeanor). Valdivia's article documents the trauma, stress, fear, and anxieties faced by returning deported people living in states of hyper-illegality and their families. This article contributes valuable insights to extant work on the psychological impacts of deportation, which extend beyond deported individuals. It also provides a framework for understanding the vast and often circular nature of the US deportation system.

CONCLUSION

This issue considers new perspectives on the implications of the US deportation system, which we conceptualize as entailing premigration experiences, within-US consequences, and post-deportations outcomes. Each of the contributions to this issue speaks to aspects of this system, including by describing its operation and growth. While these insights reflect an advancement of our understanding of the impact and effects of deportation, considerable methodological challenges remain for all researchers interested in the US deportation system. In particular, researchers face concerning barriers to data access and transparency from DHS (Government Accountability Office 2024; Transactional Records Access Clearinghouse 2017, 2019). For example, a recent report by the Government Accountability Office (2024) found that ICE understated its detention numbers by up to tens of thousands of individuals, a trend that appears to have continued into 2025 (Kocher 2025b). The Transactional Records Access Clearinghouse has also documented "gross irregularities in recent data releases from the Executive Office for Immigration Re-

view (EOIR), the agency that oversees the US immigration court system" (Transactional Records Access Clearinghouse 2019), as well as ICE's refusal to transparently report detainer information (Transactional Records Access Clearinghouse 2017). Recently, however, the Deportation Data Project successfully resolved FOIA litigation requiring DHS to provide individual identifiers for every person in its system.[6] This unprecedented innovation will enable researchers and other stakeholders to trace individuals' movements through the deportation system, from apprehension to detention and through the immigration courts, thereby facilitating more comprehensive analyses of the outcomes of the deportation system. However, considerably more data transparency is necessary. Furthermore, while the research we have reviewed herein provides substantial evidence of the harms of the US deportation system, additional studies of premigration and post-deportation experiences (and their linkages) will be particularly valuable. In addition, research that documents the impacts of deportation policies implemented more recently—such as those under the Biden and second Trump administrations—will be critical to understanding the vast, complex, and multifaceted impacts of the US deportation system.

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