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The effect of immigration enforcement on crime reporting: Evidence from Dallas[☆]

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ABSTRACT

Mistrust between immigrants and the police may undermine law enforcement's ability to keep communities safe. This paper documents that immigration policies affect an individual's willingness to report crime. I analyze the 2015 Priority Enforcement Program, which focused immigration enforcement on individuals convicted of serious crimes and shifted resources away from immigration-related offenses. I use data from the Dallas Police Department that include a complainant's ethnicity to show that the number of violent and property crimes reported to the police by Hispanics increased by 4 percent after the introduction of PEP. These results suggest that reducing enforcement of individuals who do not pose a threat to public safety can potentially improve trust between immigrant communities and the police.

1. Introduction

The ability of law enforcement officials to detect and sanction criminal behavior depends on a community's willingness to report crime. However, unauthorized immigrants or people living near unauthorized immigrants might fear that contact with the police could result in law enforcement learning about an individual's immigration status (see for example, [Lake et al., 2013](#)). Under-reporting of crime can make it more difficult for police departments to prevent and solve crimes, leading to a

misallocation of resources and inhibiting investigation or prosecution of offenders ([Langton et al., 2012](#)). Yet, a majority of crimes—even serious violent crimes—often go unreported.¹

Immigrants' hesitancy to contact the police likely stems from federal immigration programs (i.e., the 287(g) and Secure Communities programs) that established cooperation between local law enforcement and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS)'s Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agency.² Indeed, as the number of detentions and deportations rose between 2008 and 2014 as a result of Secure Communi-

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¹ The National Crime Victimization Survey found that in 2016, only 44% of 5.4 million violent crimes and 35% of 15.8 million property crimes were reported to the police ([Morgan and Kena, 2018](#)).

² For more background on the strengthening of the 287(g) program in 2006 and the launch of Secure Communities in 2008, I refer the reader to [Alsan and Yang \(2018\)](#), [Miles and Cox \(2014\)](#), [Wang and Kaushal \(2019\)](#), and [Watson \(2013\)](#).

ties, a number of police departments expressed that worsening relations with the Hispanic community was making them less effective.³

As one illustration of this concern, former Chief of the Los Angeles Police Department William J. Bratton remarked:

Keeping America's neighborhoods safe requires our police forces to have the trust and help of everyone in our communities. My nearly 40 years in law enforcement and my experience as Police Commissioner in Boston and New York City and as Chief in Los Angeles has taught me this. Yet every day our effectiveness is diminished because immigrants living and working in our communities are afraid to have any contact with the police. [...] My officers can't prevent or solve crimes if victims or witnesses are unwilling to talk to us because of the fear of being deported. [...] We can't solve crimes that aren't reported because the victims are afraid to come forward to the police.

Many local jurisdictions began limiting their cooperation with ICE, which eventually convinced DHS to suspend the Secure Communities program in November of 2014.

This paper studies whether the Priority Enforcement Program (PEP)—a federal program that was launched in 2015 to rebuild trust between law enforcement and immigrant communities—changed the degree to which Hispanic individuals reported incidents to the police. Under PEP, the agency no longer sought to detain individuals with immigration offenses alone, and instead only focused on detaining individuals convicted of significant criminal offenses. In reducing the number of circumstances under which it could detain individuals, ICE attempted to re-establish the cooperation that it lost during the height of Secure Communities with state and local jurisdictions.

By redefining ICE's priorities to only focus on individuals who posed a threat to public safety, PEP reduced the likelihood that an unauthorized immigrant who had not committed a crime would be detained or deported, thereby reducing the cost of reporting an incident to the police. However, PEP did not lower the probability that an immigrant who was convicted of a serious crime would be detained. For these reasons, PEP—unlike most other immigration policies—directly increased the incentives for Hispanic victims to report incidents, without simultaneously increasing the incentives for offenders to commit a serious crime.

To quantify the impact of this program on the crime reporting behavior of Hispanic individuals, I use administrative data from the Dallas Police Department (DPD). This incident-level dataset from the DPD is relatively unique in that it includes information about a complainant's race and Hispanic ethnicity as well as his or her full name.⁴ Using this information, I employ a difference-in-differences strategy, in which I estimate how Hispanic complainants' reporting behavior changed relative to reporting by non-Hispanic complainants in the same neighborhood (i.e., Census tract) after the introduction of PEP. In addition to the richness of its policing data, Dallas is a useful setting for evaluating this policy because slightly more than 40 percent of the population is Hispanic and the vast majority of neighborhoods are at least 20 percent Hispanic.⁵ Moreover, roughly 20–25 percent of Dallas County's Hispanic population is unauthorized immigrants (U.S. Census Bureau, 2019b; Migration Policy Institute, 2018).

Using this identification strategy, I find that after PEP was launched, the number of serious crimes reported to the police by Hispanic complainants increased by around 4 percent (relative to the mean of 15 crimes in a tract per quarter).⁶ A back-of-the-envelope calculation sug-

gests that during the year and a half that PEP was in effect, the DPD was notified of around 1200 more serious crimes than it would have been otherwise. Importantly, increased reporting might have dissuaded offenders from committing crimes against Hispanic individuals, so if anything, I am biased against finding an increase in Hispanics' crime reporting, and these figures are likely conservative estimates of the policy's effect. The results are robust to the definition of neighborhood used as well as to the identification of Hispanic complainants using names (as opposed to using the race/ethnicity recorded by the DPD).

In the last part of the paper, I consider alternative explanations for the increase in Hispanic-reported incidents following the implementation of PEP: namely, a rise in the underlying crime rates of Hispanic offenders (who often commit crimes against other Hispanic individuals) and growth of the Hispanic population.⁷ Specifically, I use data on arrests and suspects from the DPD to show that the share of arrestees and suspects who were Hispanic stayed relatively constant over this time period. These results suggest that the increase in reported crime was likely not driven by Hispanic individuals committing more crimes, which is consistent with the program's goal of prioritizing the detainment of serious criminal offenders. I then use the American Community Survey as well as data on school enrollment to show that there was not a sudden influx of Hispanic individuals into Dallas that could explain the increase in Hispanic complainants.

This paper contributes to a number of literatures. First, I add to a growing literature in economics studying how immigration laws and policies can influence the choices and behavior of immigrants. A number of studies show that immigration policies that instill fear can affect the physical and mental health as well as economic outcomes of immigrants, and can have a "chilling" effect on their willingness to participate in safety-net programs (Alsan and Yang, 2018; Amuedo-Dorantes et al., 2018; East et al., 2018; Wang and Kaushal, 2019; Watson, 2014). Previous studies have also shown that immigration policies affect immigrants' educational attainment as well as their willingness to file for permanent residency (Amuedo-Dorantes and Arenas-Arroyo, 2021; Kuka et al., 2020; Liscow and Woolston, 2018). The most closely related study to this one is Comino et al. (2020), which shows that the 1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act increased amnesty recipients' likelihood of reporting victimizations. To my knowledge, this study is the first in this literature to consider the effect of modern-day immigration policies on individuals' willingness to report crimes to the police, a key input into public safety.

Second, this paper is related to a number of studies, mainly in criminology and sociology, that use surveys to study the relationship between immigrant communities and law enforcement (see for example, Kirk et al., 2012, Tyler et al., 2010, and Tyler, 2005). This paper is among the first in this literature to use administrative data to estimate the causal effect of immigration enforcement on the number of interactions between immigrants and the police. Moreover, by showing how crime reporting increases when the enforcement environment changes, this study also contributes to a relatively small literature on the underreporting of crime as well as on policies that encourage or disincentivize individuals from reporting crime (Ang et al., 2021; Carr and Doleac, 2018; Miller and Segal, 2019). Indeed, despite the millions of crimes that go unreported, little is known about the effectiveness of policies to increase an individual's willingness to report a crime.

Finally, this paper complements a large body of literature that estimates the effect of immigration enforcement on crime rates and police effectiveness (Amuedo-Dorantes and Deza, 2019; Bohn et al., 2015; Chalfin and Deza, 2020; Cox and Miles, 2015; Freedman et al., 2018; Hines and Peri, 2019; Miles and Cox, 2014; Treyger et al., 2014; Ciancio, 2017). Within this body of literature, an obstacle to interpreting results is differentiating whether changes in crime rates are driven by

³ Well over 90% of ICE detentions during Secure Communities were of Hispanic individuals (Alsan and Yang, 2018).

⁴ Most other police departments are either unwilling to release this level of information or have inaccurate data on complainants' race and ethnicity.

⁵ The median Census tract in Dallas in 2010 was 30% Hispanic (TIGER/Line Shapefiles, 2017).

⁶ For the remainder of the paper, "serious crimes" will refer to crimes classified by the FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting program as violent crimes (e.g., assault and robbery) or property crimes (e.g., burglary and theft).

⁷ As an example, between 2012 and 2015, 40% of violent victimizations against Hispanic individuals were committed by Hispanic offenders (Morgan, 2017).

changes in underlying criminal behavior or changes in crime reporting. By studying Dallas' implementation of the Priority Enforcement Program—a program that increased the incentives to report crime, without also increasing the incentives to commit serious crime—this study is one of the first in this literature to be able to directly estimate changes in crime reporting behavior.

2. Background on the Priority Enforcement Program

2.1. Development and passage of PEP

The 2008 Secure Communities program increased coordination between local law enforcement and federal immigration authorities in order to detain and deport non-citizen immigrants who had committed crimes. Secure Communities ensured that an arrested person's fingerprints were not only sent to the FBI, but were also forwarded to the Department of Homeland Security so that ICE could determine whether there was probable cause for deportation. Importantly, under this program, ICE could seek the transfer of non-citizen immigrants in state or local custody (i.e., issue a "detainer request") for a broad number of reasons, including immigration-related offenses.⁸ After the start of Secure Communities, the number of individuals detained and deported increased nationwide: between 2008 and 2013, more than 2.3 million individuals were deported.⁹

A few years after its introduction, a number of state and local jurisdictions became wary of the Secure Communities program and began limiting their cooperation with ICE, citing reduced trust between immigrant communities and the police as a primary reason.¹⁰ Moreover, some local jurisdictions were hesitant to cooperate with ICE after federal courts found that parts of the Secure Communities program were unconstitutional. By 2014, more than 100 localities—not including Dallas—had limited or ended their cooperation with ICE.¹¹

In November of that year, Secretary of Homeland Security Jeh Johnson issued a memo suspending Secure Communities, citing the reduced cooperation at the local level as well as the federal court decisions as the main reasons (Department of Homeland Security, 2014). He then announced the program that would soon take its place: the Priority Enforcement Program. The program was officially launched in July of 2015 after ICE released a brochure on PEP with the new enforcement guidelines as well as the new forms for law enforcement officials and ICE officers.¹²

The main goal of the program was to target resources toward detaining and deporting individuals convicted of *significant criminal offenses*. PEP's guidelines directed ICE to focus on detaining individuals who posed a threat to public safety (e.g., participating in gang or terrorist activity, being convicted of a felony), and to no longer seek the

⁸ A detainer request is a written notice from ICE requesting local jails or law enforcement to detain an individual while ICE decides whether he or she will be taken into federal custody for removal purposes.

⁹ To better assess this magnitude, roughly 388,000 individuals were deported each year between 2008 and 2013, compared to 239,000 between 2005 and 2007, implying a 62% increase in the annual deportation levels (TRAC, 2010; TRAC, 2014).

¹⁰ For example, in 2012 the Los Angeles Police Department announced that it would no longer honor ICE detainer requests for unauthorized immigrants arrested for nonviolent offenses (e.g., driving without a license) unless they were part of a gang or had a criminal record. Police Chief Charlie Beck said that Secure Communities had hampered efforts to keep the city safe by eroding trust between communities and the police. He announced, "Community trust is extremely important to effective policing. So it's my intent, by issuing this change in procedures, that we gain this trust back." See: "Los Angeles to Cease Transferring Some Immigrants." *The New York Times*. October 4, 2012.

¹¹ "Why cities are rebelling against the Obama administration's deportation policies." *Vox*. June 6, 2014.

¹² The six-month period between the suspension of Secure Communities and the official launch of PEP was a period of uncertainty. In January of 2015, the U.S. House of Representatives tried to pass a bill to reinstate Secure Communities, but it was blocked by the Senate. ICE slowly began implementing the new program after its announcement, but it was not until June 12, 2015 that ICE distributed an official brochure on PEP as well as the new forms.

transfer of individuals with solely civil immigration offenses or those who had not been convicted of a criminal offense.¹³

Unlike most other immigration policies that affect both victims and offenders, PEP is unique in that by design, it increased the incentives for individuals to report incidents, but did not alter the punishment for serious criminal behavior. Indeed, in his original memo announcing PEP, Secretary Johnson motivated the changes by highlighting the need to support community policing and to maintain the trust of individuals in working with local law enforcement. Throughout 2015, ICE (and DHS more broadly) "conducted a nationwide effort to implement PEP and promote collaboration, reaching out to thousands of local law enforcement agencies and government officials" (Department of Homeland Security, 2015). The Department of Homeland Security announced in their FY2015 report that most law enforcement agencies were back to cooperating with ICE via PEP. This program remained in effect until January of 2017 with the start of the Trump administration.

2.2. Implementation of PEP in Dallas

After announcing the launch of PEP, ICE tried to engage with state and local governments as well as law enforcement officials in order to introduce the program and ensure cooperation. Even though Dallas did not stop cooperating with ICE during Secure Communities, the director of ICE still visited the city in May of 2015 to introduce the agency's new priorities.¹⁴ She remarked at one meeting that "People think of us as deporting women and children and adult males willy nilly. It is my job to ensure that each of our 26 field officers are actually enforcing the priorities which focuses on criminals." ICE representatives then met with Dallas County officials in July and August of 2015 to further discuss PEP, and Dallas County Sheriff Lupe Valdez formally agreed to participate in the program following these meetings.

In late August, Sheriff Valdez also introduced a new local policy to ensure the enforcement of these redefined priorities.¹⁵ Dallas County officials began reviewing ICE's requests prior to honoring them—with the vetting guidelines being very similar to the PEP priorities—thereby ensuring that only individuals who posed a threat to public safety were transferred to ICE's custody. Given the similarity between the federal and the local policies, the Sheriff's office did not decline any of ICE's requests following the launch of PEP. In a spreadsheet tracking PEP's reception by local jurisdictions, ICE officials write about Dallas County (DALCO): "DALCO detainer vetting is similar to our PEP priorities. DALCO provided [ICE] with the points-of-contact for detainer vetting and all detainees have been approved since the inception of the process."

2.3. ICE Requests before and after PEP

Following the announcement and implementation of these redefined enforcement priorities, the number of ICE detainer requests began to fall and notably, the composition of individuals with immigration detainers began to change. Using data on ICE detainer requests from the Transactional Records Access Clearinghouse (TRAC), Fig. 1 shows the number of immigration detainers issued in Dallas County each month between 2012 and 2015 separately by an individual's most serious criminal con-

¹³ More precisely, the prioritized enforcement included: participating in an organized criminal gang or terrorism; constituting a threat to national security; or being convicted of a felony or aggravated felony, three or more misdemeanor offenses, or one "significant" misdemeanor (e.g., burglary, domestic violence, DUI). The de-prioritized enforcement included individuals with civil immigration offenses alone or individuals who had been charged, but not convicted of criminal offenses (U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, 2015).

¹⁴ "ICE chief says immigration removals focus on convicted criminals." *The Dallas Morning News*. May 20, 2015.

¹⁵ The motivation behind the sheriff's new policy was not clear, but it was perhaps the result of growing controversy and legal challenges to immigration holds and inmate deaths in Dallas County earlier that year.

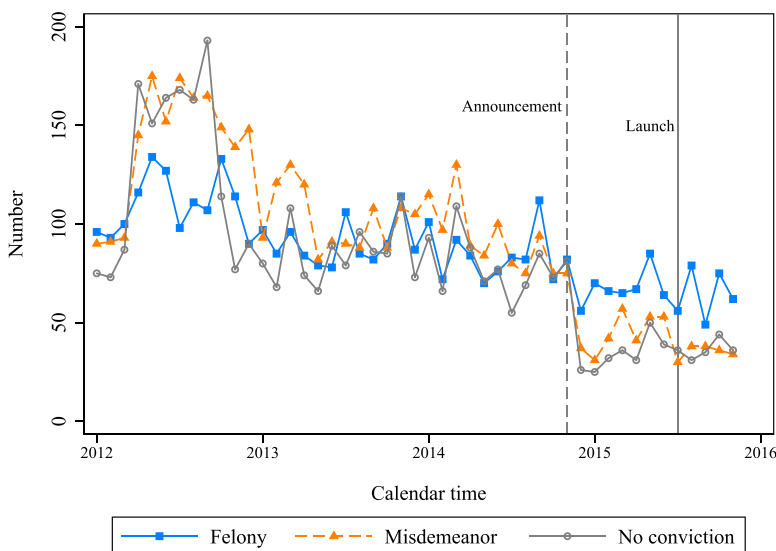


Fig. 1. Number of Monthly Detainers Issued in Dallas County, by Most Serious Criminal Conviction. *Note:* This figure plots the number of detainer requests issued each month using data from the Transactional Records Access Clearinghouse at Syracuse University (TRAC, 2018). “Felony” refers to detainer requests issued for individuals convicted of a felony or aggravated felony. “No conviction” refers to detainer requests issued for individuals who were either charged but not convicted of a crime, or neither charged nor convicted of a crime. The vertical dashed and solid lines mark the announcement and launch of PEP, respectively.

viction.¹⁶ This figure highlights that PEP seems to have achieved its enforcement goals in Dallas County: it hardly changed the number of immigration detainees issued for individuals convicted of a felony or aggravated felony, but it lowered the number of detainees issued for individuals convicted of misdemeanors and for those with no conviction. A back-of-the-envelope calculation suggests that if the number of detainees for these latter two groups stayed at their 2014 levels, ICE would have detained nearly 1150 more individuals in Dallas County by the end of 2015.

3. Theoretical predictions for PEP’s effects

In this section, I discuss the effect that PEP likely had on the share of incidents reported to the police as well as on the amount of serious crime committed. PEP lowered the average cost of reporting an incident, and we therefore expect the share of crimes reported by Hispanic complainants to increase following the program’s introduction. Criminal offenders likely responded to this increased probability of reporting, and we therefore expect the number of serious crimes committed—particularly against Hispanic victims—to unambiguously fall.

3.1. Effect on reporting

Consider a simple model of crime reporting in which victim i chooses whether to report an incident ($R = 1$) or not ($R = 0$) based on the utility derived from each alternative:

$$U_{R=1} = f(B_i) - g(C_i, \pi_i) + \alpha_i$$

$$U_{R=0} = 0$$

Individual i ’s decision to report a crime is a function of the perceived benefits of reporting B_i , which include benefits to the individual (e.g., personal safety, the potential to recover a stolen good) as well as benefits to the community (e.g., improved public safety from finding the offender). Analogously, the decision to report a crime is also dependent on the costs to the individual C_i (e.g., time or psychic costs).¹⁷

Unauthorized immigrants might fear that contact with the police could result in law enforcement learning about their immigration status. Anecdotal and empirical evidence also suggests that individuals living

with or near unauthorized immigrants alter their behavior out of fear of revealing their non-citizen contacts.¹⁸ An individual’s decision to report a crime is therefore also a function of the immigration-related cost of reporting a crime, π_i . The cost π_i is an increasing function of the individual’s likelihood of being deported, P_i , as well as of the probability that the individual’s contacts are deported, P_n .¹⁹

Finally, the utility obtained from reporting an incident is also a function of α_i , which is individual i ’s relative idiosyncratic preference for reporting (where utility from not reporting has been normalized to 0). Individual i will choose to report an incident if and only if the utility obtained from reporting the crime exceeds the utility derived from not reporting the crime:

$$\alpha_i > g(C_i, \pi_i) - f(B_i).$$

By de-prioritizing immigration-related offenses, PEP reduced the likelihood that non-citizen immigrants *without* a criminal history would be deported, thereby lowering their P_i and correspondingly their cost π_i of reporting an incident to the police. Similarly, PEP reduced P_n for individuals with non-criminal non-citizen contacts, thereby also decreasing these individuals’ cost of reporting an incident. Because PEP’s goal was to continue detaining serious offenders, the program likely did not lower P_i for unauthorized victims with criminal histories, nor did it lower P_n for individuals with unauthorized contacts with criminal histories. Overall, though, by lowering π_i for *some* individuals, PEP on average decreased the cost of reporting an offense, and we therefore expect to see the share of incidents reported to increase following the introduction of the program.²⁰

¹⁸ For example, in a 2012 survey of over 2000 Latinos around the United States, 44% of respondents reported that they were less likely to contact the police if they had been the victim of a crime because they feared that law enforcement officials would use the interaction as an opportunity to inquire into their immigration status or that of people they know (Lake et al., 2013).

¹⁹ For individuals who are citizens and who do not have non-citizen contacts, $\pi_i = 0$ and this term does not alter their decision to report a crime.

²⁰ It is also plausible that a victim i might consider the immigrant status of offender j in deciding whether to report a crime, so that π_i is also increasing in P_j (see, for example, Iyengar, 2009). For these individuals, we should still expect their likelihood of reporting to increase with PEP, although likely by a smaller magnitude than for individuals who do not factor P_j into their decision. Regardless of whether P_j enters into π_i , however, PEP incentivizes immigrant victims and their contacts to report crime by lowering P_i or P_n , and we should therefore expect, on average, an increase in the share of incidents reported.

¹⁶ Unfortunately, ICE has not released data that include individuals’ criminal convictions for any month after November of 2015.

¹⁷ The costs and benefits of reporting can differ across incident types k and time periods t . The corresponding subscripts are suppressed for simplicity.

Table 1
Summary Statistics for Police Incidents in Dallas, by Ethnicity of Complainant.

	All Incidents	Hispanic Complainant	Non-Hispanic Complainant
Hispanic	0.31	.	.
Black	0.38	.	0.55
White	0.31	.	0.45
Violent crime	0.12	0.14	0.12
Property crime	0.30	0.33	0.28
Low-level offense	0.19	0.19	0.19
Non-criminal incident	0.39	0.35	0.41
Observations	294,397	90,069	204,328

Note: These data include all incidents for 2014–2016 in which the complainant was classified as white, Black, or Hispanic. Non-Hispanic refers to individuals categorized as “white” or “Black” in the data. All crimes are classified using the Uniform Crime Report offense code. “Violent crime” refers to assault, human trafficking, kidnapping, intoxicated manslaughter, murder, robbery, terrorist threats, weapons offenses, and organized crime. “Property crime” refers to arson, burglary, thefts, and unauthorized use of a motor vehicle (UUMV). “Low-level offense” refers to crimes classified as alarm incidents, criminal mischief, criminal trespassing, disorderly conduct, DWIs, embezzlement, escaping/evading, forge and counterfeit, fraud, liquor offenses, lost property, narcotics and drugs, offenses against child, prostitution, resisting arrest, runaway, seized property, and sex offenses. “Non-criminal incident” refers to all other incidents reported to the police that are not criminal in nature (namely, motor vehicle or firearms accidents, missing persons, injuries, etc.).

3.2. Endogenous behavioral response

First, it is worth reiterating that because ICE’s treatment of serious criminal offenders did not change with PEP, the policy did not *directly* alter the incentives for offenders to commit serious crimes. In this way, PEP differs from other immigration policies—which change the incentives for both victims and offenders—and I conclude that PEP only affected the amount of serious crime committed through its effect on victim reporting.

Here, I consider how PEP’s priorities affected the likelihood that an offender would victimize individual v , where $v \in \{H, N\}$ represents Hispanic and non-Hispanic victims. Specifically, PEP increased Hispanic victims’ likelihood of reporting, and we therefore expect the overall number of serious crimes committed against Hispanic victims to decrease with the introduction of PEP; γ therefore represents offenders’ substitution away from Hispanic to non-Hispanic victims.²¹ We also expect an overall decline in the number of crimes in which the offender does not know the victim type (e.g., auto theft of a stranger’s car) because the likelihood of being apprehended has risen due to increased reporting; this change is represented by β . Finally, there potentially could be additional deterrence effects δ from improved allocation of police resources (as a result of increased crime reporting).

	Change in victimizations
Hispanic victims	$-\gamma - \beta - \delta$
Non-Hispanic victims	$\gamma - \beta - \delta$

Combined, these changes yield two main predictions.²² First, the change in the victimization rate of Hispanic individuals is unambiguously negative. Second, the change in the victimization rate of Hispanic individuals is unambiguously *more* negative than the change in the victimization rate of non-Hispanic individuals.

In Section 6, I discuss how these predictions might differ for low-level offenses (e.g., disorderly conduct or vandalism). For a more detailed discussion of these predictions, I refer the reader to Online Appendix B.

3.3. Summary of predictions

The primary goal of PEP was to increase trust between immigrant communities and law enforcement officials. The new priorities lowered the cost of reporting, and I thus expect the share of incidents reported by

²¹ It is also possible that offenders will be deterred from crime altogether, as opposed to switching to non-Hispanic victims. The two main predictions from this subsection are unchanged in this scenario.

²² Note that the predictions are written as changes in the number of victimizations from a pre-period baseline level.

Hispanic complainants to increase following the launch of the program. By increasing individuals’ likelihood of reporting, I also expect that PEP affected the number of serious crimes committed: I expect the number of serious crimes committed against Hispanic victims to decrease and for this decline to be more negative than the change in the number of serious crimes committed against non-Hispanic victims.²³

4. Data and methodology

4.1. Data on police incidents

In order to estimate whether PEP had an effect on Hispanic individuals’ willingness to report crimes to the police, I utilize data on police incidents in Dallas. These data come from the Crime Analysis Unit of the Dallas Police Department and report information on every incident report written by a DPD officer. The data not only include information about the incident (e.g., the offense code and the location’s spatial coordinates), but they also include details about the complainant, including his or her full name as well as race/ethnicity. I restrict the sample to include all reported incidents in which the complainant was categorized as white, Black, or Hispanic, and restrict the sample period to the years 2014 through 2016.²⁴

Table 1 shows the share of police incidents reported by Hispanics and non-Hispanics (i.e., white and Black residents) in Dallas. This table highlights that only 31 percent of incidents are reported by Hispanics, even though roughly 40 percent of Dallas is Hispanic (U.S. Census Bureau, 2019a). In contrast, 38 percent of incidents are reported by Black complainants, even though only 23 percent of Dallas is Black. These differences could arise from differences in crime rates, reporting rates, or a combination of both. Table 1 also shows the breakdown of reported incidents into violent crimes (e.g., assault and robbery), property crimes (e.g., burglary and theft), low-level offenses (e.g., criminal mischief, disorderly conduct), and non-criminal incidents (e.g., motor vehicle acci-

²³ These predictions are similar to those in Comino et al. (2020), which considers the effect of granting amnesty to unauthorized immigrants. Their model predicts that the 1986 policy change increased immigrants’ likelihood of reporting crime and reduced the number of immigrants who were victims of crime.

²⁴ Individuals with missing race or ethnicity (0.5% of the sample) are excluded from the sample. Individuals categorized as belonging to any other group (3% of the sample) are also excluded because it is not clear if or how they were affected by the new enforcement priorities. With regard to the sample period, the number of ICE detainer requests was spiking during Secure Communities (as seen in Fig. 1), suggesting that 2012 and 2013 are not suitable years for the pre-period since the incentives for crime reporting were likely changing in these years (TRAC, 2019). PEP was suspended in January of 2017, so I focus on the time period during which the program was active. Doing a similar analysis to the one below with 2017 data shows that the reporting behavior of non-Hispanic individuals seems to change in 2017 (perhaps also because of the new administration), so that non-Hispanic individuals no longer seem like a suitable comparison group in that year.

dents). Roughly 40 percent of the incidents in these data are classified as violent or property crimes, and another 40 percent are classified as non-criminal incidents. The distribution of crimes is generally similar for both Hispanic and non-Hispanic complainants, although a higher share of reported incidents with non-Hispanic complainants are non-criminal events.²⁵

4.2. Empirical strategy

In order to estimate the effect of PEP on the degree to which Hispanic individuals in Dallas reported incidents, I employ a difference-in-differences strategy. The spirit of the analysis is that the immigration policy change only affected Hispanic individuals' incentives to report crime, while leaving the incentives unchanged for white and Black individuals. I therefore compare the change in the number of police incidents reported by Hispanic individuals (i.e., the treatment group) with the change for non-Hispanic individuals (i.e., the control group) in the same neighborhood. The main assumption underlying this approach is that the reporting behavior of Hispanic and non-Hispanic individuals would have continued to trend similarly in the absence of PEP. This analysis also assumes that unauthorized immigrants as well as individuals with non-citizen contacts in Dallas are more likely to be Hispanic.²⁶

Specifically, I estimate the following equation:

$$\ln(\text{Incidents})_{nht} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{Hispanic}_h + \sum_{t=-6}^6 \theta_t (\text{Hispanic}_h \times \text{Quarter}_t) + \lambda_t + \omega_n + \epsilon_{nht} \quad (1)$$

where n , h , and t index neighborhoods, Hispanic ethnicity, and time, respectively. The dependent variable is the logged number of incidents in neighborhood n , in time period t , reported by ethnicity h . Some neighborhoods have no incidents reported by either ethnicity in a time period; I add one to all of the counts and then apply the log transformation in order to incorporate these observations into the analysis.²⁷ Equation (1) estimates a coefficient θ_t for each quarter in the sample, so that I can plot changes in reporting over the entire time period (with the difference in reporting centered at zero in the second quarter of 2015 before PEP is launched).

To summarize changes in crime reporting after the introduction of PEP, I also fit simplified models of the following form:

$$\ln(\text{Incidents})_{nht} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{Hispanic}_h + \beta_2 (\text{Hispanic}_h \times \text{Post}_t) + \lambda_t + \omega_n + \epsilon_{nht} \quad (2)$$

where Post_t is an indicator variable equal to one in all quarters during which PEP was active. This restricted model assumes that there are no pre-trends in reporting behavior and quantifies the average effect of the program in a given quarter. The coefficient β_2 is the difference-in-differences estimate, capturing the extent to which changes in reporting before and after PEP differ for Hispanics relative to non-Hispanics.

Both specifications include neighborhood fixed effects to absorb level differences in crime across neighborhoods. The models also include

²⁵ Online Appendix Figure A1 shows the share of incidents that have a Hispanic complainant in each Census tract as well as the share of each tract's population that is Hispanic. These maps suggest that even though Hispanic communities are concentrated in the southwest and southeast parts of the city, most neighborhoods in Dallas are at least 15–20% Hispanic. Moreover, the fact that these maps are so similar in depicting where Hispanic communities reside suggests that the DPD data are relatively accurate in identifying Hispanic complainants.

²⁶ In the 2012–2016 American Community Survey, 80% of non-citizen individuals residing in Dallas County Public Use Microdata Areas (PUMAs) were Hispanic (Ruggles et al., 2019).

²⁷ The level of observation is ethnicity \times neighborhood \times quarter \times year. I choose to use the log transformation in order to reduce the influence of outliers and to estimate the average percent change in crime reporting (given wide heterogeneity in crime reporting across neighborhoods). In Section 5, I check the robustness of the main result to using Poisson regressions.

quarter \times year fixed effects to account for time-variant factors, such as the seasonality of crime, that influence the number of incidents.²⁸ Standard errors are clustered at the neighborhood level. In all of the main results, a neighborhood is synonymous to a Census tract (of which there are approximately 340 in Dallas, with an average population of 4000 individuals), but in Section 5, I show that the results are robust to using the DPD's police beats as an alternative way to define neighborhoods.

4.3. Interpreting the difference-in-differences estimate

The empirical strategy estimates the degree to which the difference in the number of incidents reported by Hispanics and non-Hispanics changes before and after PEP. I now discuss how a positive β_2 coefficient—which quantifies the average effect of the policy—implies that Hispanic reporting increased, as well as how this approach is likely underestimating the increase in crime reporting.

The number of incidents in the data is a function of both the total amount of crime that occurred as well as the share of incidents that were reported:

$$\hat{N}_{ht} = N_{ht} \times P_{ht} \quad (3)$$

where $t \in \{0, 1\}$ represents the time before and after the policy change, and $h \in \{H, N\}$ represents Hispanic and non-Hispanic complainants. N_{ht} is therefore the number of crimes committed against ethnicity h in time period t , and P_{ht} is the share of incidents reported by ethnicity h in time period t (or in other words, ethnicity h 's probability of reporting an incident to the police).

Empirically, Eq. (2) estimates the difference-in-differences coefficient as follows:

$$\beta_2 = \mathbb{E}[(\ln(\hat{N}_{H,1}) - \ln(\hat{N}_{H,0})) - (\ln(\hat{N}_{N,1}) - \ln(\hat{N}_{N,0}))] \quad (4)$$

Plugging in Eq. (3) into Eq. (4) and assuming that $P_{N,0} = P_{N,1}$ (i.e., non-Hispanic complainants' propensity to report crime did not change with PEP), we see that:

$$\beta_2 = \underbrace{\mathbb{E}[\ln(P_{H,1}) - \ln(P_{H,0})]}_{(a): \text{Hispanic reporting effect}} + \underbrace{\mathbb{E}[\ln(N_{H,1}) - \ln(N_{H,0})]}_{(b): \text{Hispanic victimization effect}} - \underbrace{\mathbb{E}[\ln(N_{N,1}) - \ln(N_{N,0})]}_{(c): \text{Non-Hispanic victimization effect}} \quad (5)$$

The first term of this expression reflects the program's effect on Hispanic individuals' propensity to report incidents to the police (i.e., the main parameter of interest). Given the program's goals, we expect this term to be positive. The second and third terms represent changes in the number of crimes committed against Hispanic and non-Hispanic individuals, respectively. We expect victimizations to decline due to increased reporting, and we expect the change in (b) to be greater in magnitude than the change in (c). Together, these predictions imply that if β_2 is positive, it must be the case that Hispanic individuals' propensity to report incidents increased.

Importantly, the empirical strategy allows us to compare the change in the number of victimizations in the same neighborhood. Following the predictions outlined above, if Hispanic individuals are now victimized less often than non-Hispanic individuals in the same neighborhood (i.e., (b) minus (c) is negative), then β_2 will be an underestimate of the increase in the share of incidents that are reported by Hispanic individuals. Alternatively, if the number of victimizations declined equally for Hispanic and non-Hispanic individuals in the same neighborhood (i.e.,

²⁸ One might think that the desired specification would include neighborhood \times time fixed effects in order to flexibly control for idiosyncratic shocks within a neighborhood and quarter. However, each neighborhood \times time pair in the data has exactly one treatment and one control observation. So by construction, the empirical approach already compares the treatment and control units within a neighborhood and quarter \times year. Including neighborhood \times time fixed effects does not change the treatment-control differences, and therefore mechanically does not affect the difference-in-differences coefficient.

Table 2
Difference-in-Differences Estimates: Serious Incidents.

	(1) Violent and Property Crimes	(2) Murder	(3) Financial Offenses	(4) Non-financial Offenses
Hispanic x Start of PEP	0.037** [0.019]	-0.011 [0.007]	0.044** [0.020]	-0.021 [0.023]
Mean of Outcome	2.22	0.03	2.04	0.97
Average Incidents	15.22	0.05	12.06	3.16
Crime Reporting Bound	Lower	Lower	Lower	Lower
Observations	6740	6740	6740	6740

Note: This table uses incident-level data from the Dallas Police Department and reports the difference-in-differences estimates from Eq. (2). Column 1 considers all offenses that are classified as violent or property crimes using the Uniform Crime Report offense codes. The remaining columns consider subsets of these offenses. “Financial offenses” refers to burglary, robbery, theft, and motor vehicle theft. “Non-financial offenses” refers to violent and property crimes that are not financial in nature (e.g., assault and murder; for more details, see the note for Table 1). In all columns, the dependent variable is the logged number of incidents reported by that ethnicity, in that tract, and time period; I add one to the count prior to applying the log transformation. “Average incidents” refers to the average number of incidents per tract per quarter. “Crime Reporting Bound” refers to whether the estimate is likely an upper or lower bound of the crime reporting effect for that group of offenses. Standard errors are clustered at the Census tract level.

(b) and (c) are each negative but essentially equal to each other), then we can directly interpret β_2 as the change in Hispanic complainants’ propensity to report incidents in the average neighborhood.

5. Main results

5.1. Increase in the reporting of serious offenses

I begin by plotting the raw data to see how the total number of incidents reported by Hispanic and non-Hispanic complainants trended over time. Online Appendix Figure A2 shows that reporting by Hispanics and non-Hispanics mirror each other from 2014 through the second quarter of 2015. However, in the third quarter of 2015 (i.e., at the time PEP is launched), the number of incidents reported by Hispanics begins to increase and diverges from the reporting patterns of non-Hispanics.

I now restrict the sample to serious offenses, which will allow me to more directly isolate the effect of this policy on crime reporting. In other words, because PEP prioritized the removal of offenders of these serious crimes, this policy did not incentivize offenders to commit more of these offenses. If there is an increase in the number of serious incidents reported, I can therefore interpret this rise as coming from increases in reporting.

Specifically, I focus on incidents classified as either violent or property crimes using the Uniform Crime Report (UCR) offense code (roughly 40 percent of all incidents).²⁹ Table 2 and Fig. 2 show that the number of serious incidents reported by Hispanic complainants increased by roughly 4 percent (on a baseline of 15 incidents per tract per quarter). Importantly, if we assume that Hispanic individuals were victimized less often after PEP relative to non-Hispanic individuals, then this behavioral response would bias me against finding an increase in Hispanic-reported incidents. Thus, the 4 percent estimate is likely a lower bound for the increase in Hispanic individuals’ likelihood of reporting incidents to the police.

As a placebo check, I consider murders, since we would not expect to see a change in the number of victimizations or in the amount of reporting (because they typically already have high reporting rates) following the introduction of the program. Indeed, column 2 of Table 2 shows that the policy has a precisely estimated zero effect on the reporting of murders.

Finally, I split serious offenses into those that are financially versus non-financially motivated. If individuals were already reporting relatively more serious offenses (e.g., assault) to the police before PEP but were on the margin of reporting financial offenses (e.g., motor vehicle

theft), then I would expect to see a larger effect for this latter group.³⁰ The results in columns 3 and 4 of Table 2 show that the increase in reporting seems to be driven by offenses with a financial motive. This result suggests that once PEP lowered the immigration-related cost of reporting, individuals were more likely to report offenses for which they perceive a personal benefit of reporting (i.e., given the potential to recover stolen goods).

5.2. Magnitudes and timing of effect

The 4 percent increase in the number of serious incidents reported implies that on average, the police were notified of 0.6 more incidents in each neighborhood per quarter following the introduction of PEP. A back-of-the-envelope calculation suggests that in the six quarters that PEP was in effect, the police were notified of around 1200 more violent and property crimes than they would have been in the absence of the program.

In terms of comparing these magnitudes to those found in other studies, Comino et al. (2020) find that the 1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act, which provided legal status to millions of immigrants, increased the reporting rate of unauthorized individuals by roughly 20 percentage points. In the case of Dallas, if I assume that PEP only affects the behavior of unauthorized immigrants (and not of individuals in their networks), then the 4 percent result suggests an implied effect of the policy of 16 percent for unauthorized immigrants.³¹ Nevertheless, it is not straightforward to compare PEP’s effect to that of other policies since an elasticity of reporting cannot be calculated: although PEP had straightforward goals, it is not obvious who responded to the policy change (i.e., unauthorized immigrants, their families, their networks) and to what degree the cost of reporting a crime fell (i.e., by how much the likelihood of deportation changed with the policy). However, to the extent that building trust is more difficult than perpetuating fear, we would expect the findings of this study to be smaller in magnitude than those found in studies about immigration policies’ “chilling” effects.³²

²⁹ It is also worth noting that reduced immigration enforcement might have improved immigrants’ economic opportunities, thereby reducing the number of financially motivated crimes committed by unauthorized offenders after PEP. If Hispanic individuals are victimized less often than non-Hispanic individuals not only because of increased reporting, but also because of these improved opportunities, then I would be even more biased against finding a crime reporting effect for financial offenses (relative to non-financial offenses).

³¹ Roughly 25% of the Hispanic population in Dallas is unauthorized (U.S. Census Bureau, 2019b, Migration Policy Institute, 2018).

³² Alsan and Yang (2018) find that the implementation of Secure Communities resulted in a 10% and 30% decline in the take up of food stamps and Supplemental Security Income, respectively, among Hispanic citizen households.

²⁹ The Dallas Police Department changed its crime classification methods in June of 2014; for the remaining specifications in the paper that use these data, I begin the sample period with the third quarter of 2014.

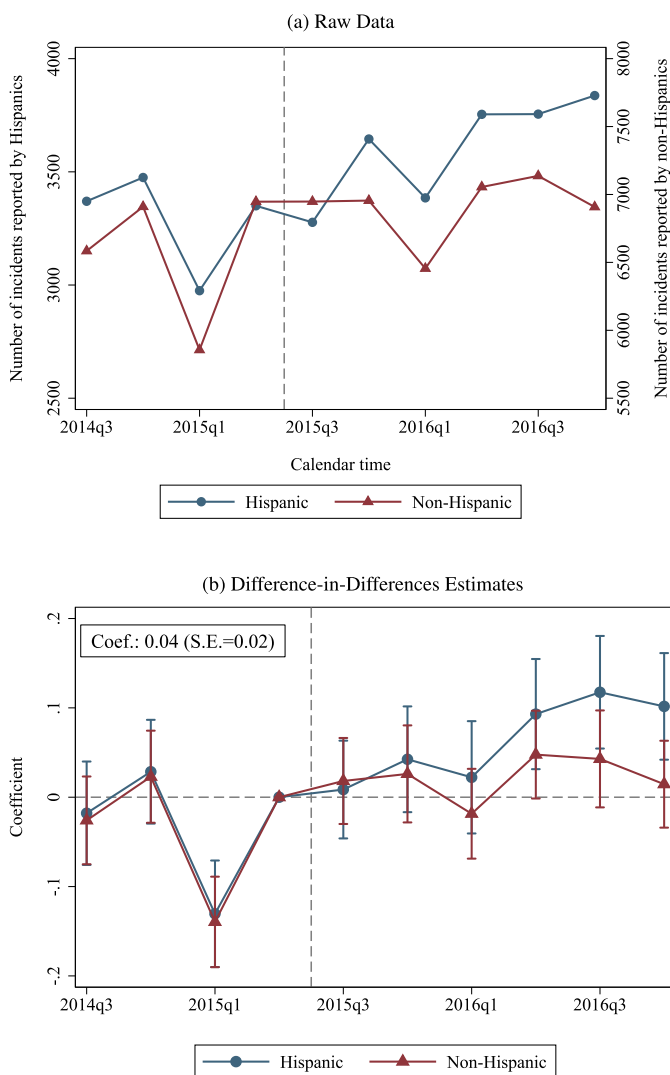


Fig. 2. Difference in Crime Reporting of Serious Offenses for Hispanics and non-Hispanics. *Note:* This figure uses incident-level data from the Dallas Police Department between the third quarter of 2014 and 2016. Panel (a) plots the raw number of serious incidents reported by Hispanic and non-Hispanic complainants (left and right y-axis, respectively). The dashed gray line represents the launch of PEP in the third quarter of 2015. Panel (b) plots the time coefficients from Eq. (1) (i.e., reporting by the control group) against the sum of the time coefficients and the corresponding Hispanic \times time interactions (i.e., reporting by the treatment group). The dependent variable is the logged number of incidents reported by that ethnicity, in that tract, and time period; I add one to the count prior to applying the log transformation. The coefficient and standard error reported are the difference-in-differences estimates from Eq. (2). Standard errors are clustered at the Census tract level. (For interpretation of the references to colour in their figure legend, the reader is referred to the web version of this article.)

Finally, it is worth noting the timing of the response. The theoretical framework in Section 3 suggests that individuals will alter their reporting behavior following a change in the immigration-related cost of reporting a crime. Fig. 2 shows that the number of Hispanic-reported incidents only increased after PEP's official introduction, even though the enforcement environment began changing with the program's announcement (as seen in Fig. 1). The timing of the response is thus consistent with individuals' perceived probability of deportation changing with the official adoption of PEP, which suggests that the formality of an immigration policy change might be an important factor for improving trust between immigrant communities and the police.

5.3. Alternative specification as well as definitions of neighborhoods & ethnicity

To check the robustness of the main results, I begin by estimating Poisson regressions, similar to Eq. (2) but allowing the dependent variable to be the count of incidents in neighborhood n , in time period t , reported by ethnicity h . Online Appendix Table A1 compares the main results to the incidence rate ratios using this approach, and confirms that PEP increased the number of serious incidents reported by Hispanics by 4 percent.

Second, I return to the main specification, but check the robustness of the main result to the chosen definition of neighborhood. Instead of using Census tracts, I consider the Dallas Police Department's police beats (of which there are roughly 235). Online Appendix Table A2 confirms the robustness of the main result, and suggests that the number of serious incidents reported by Hispanics increased by 7 percent after PEP.

Up to this point, I have been identifying Hispanic complainants using the race/ethnicity recorded by the police. If Hispanic people were more willing to identify themselves as Hispanic to law enforcement or if police officers were more willing to write down that a complainant was Hispanic after PEP, then I would see an increase in the number of Hispanic complainants that was unrelated to an increased willingness to contact the police. To rule out these explanations, I use the last name of the complainant to identify Hispanic ethnicity.³³ The Hispanic identification written down by the DPD is highly correlated with the Hispanic identification using surnames for all years in the sample period (overall correlation of 0.88), implying that the DPD data are relatively accurate in identifying Hispanic residents. Column 2 of Online Appendix Table A2 shows that the main results are hardly changed when using surnames, which leads me to conclude that the increase in complaints is not driven by different patterns in identifying Hispanic ethnicity over time.

The remaining columns of Online Appendix Table A2 confirm that the findings are robust to only counting each incident once and to using reported crime rates as the dependent variable instead of the logged number of incidents.³⁴

6. Less serious offenses & neighborhood characteristics

In this section, I begin by considering the effect of PEP on the number of non-criminal incidents and lower-level offenses reported to the police. I then consider heterogeneous effects by the share of each neighborhood's population that is likely unauthorized.

6.1. Increase in number of non-criminal incidents

I begin by considering how PEP changed the reporting of incidents that are not criminal in nature (another 40 percent of the total incidents, as shown in Table 1). More specifically, residents of Dallas report incidents to the police that do not represent criminal activity, such as motor vehicle accidents, animal bites, missing persons, and other miscellaneous incidents. Column 2 of Table 3 shows an increase of 8 percent in the reporting of these non-criminal events by Hispanic residents.

In terms of interpreting this estimate, if we assume that the number of these incidents did not change with PEP, then we can interpret the

³³ Following Arnold et al. (2018), I match the surnames in the DPD data to the 2010 Census genealogical records of surnames. If the probability that a given surname is Hispanic is greater than 80%, I identify this complainant as Hispanic. I am able to match 90% of last names in the data to the 2010 record of surnames.

³⁴ One might wonder whether the increases in reporting actually resulted in reporting more crime to the police, or whether these complainants reported crimes that the police would have known about anyway (for example, if non-Hispanic individuals would have also reported the same crime). To test this possibility, I run the same baseline specification, but only counting each incident one time (as opposed to counting each complainant-incident pair). The main result hardly changes, suggesting that the increase in complaints was likely not driven by double reporting of incidents that the police would have been notified of anyway.

Table 3
Difference-in-Differences Estimates: Less Serious Offenses.

	(1) Violent and Property Crimes	(2) Non-criminal Incidents	(3) Low-level Offenses
Hispanic \times Start of PEP	0.037** [0.019]	0.077** [0.020]	0.050** [0.019]
Mean of Outcome	2.22	2.12	1.61
Average Incidents	15.22	13.55	7.00
Crime Reporting Bound	Lower	Upper	Upper
Observations	6,740	6,740	6,740

Note: This table uses incident-level data from the Dallas Police Department and reports the difference-in-differences estimates from Eq. (2). Column 1 reproduces the estimate for violent and property crimes from Table 2. Columns 2 and 3 consider non-criminal incidents and low-level offenses, respectively. In all columns, the dependent variable is the logged number of incidents reported by that ethnicity, in that tract, and time period; I add one to the count prior to applying the log transformation. “Average incidents” refers to the average number of incidents per tract per quarter. “Crime Reporting Bound” refers to whether the estimate is likely an upper or lower bound of the crime reporting effect for that group of offenses. Standard errors are clustered at the Census tract level.

coefficient as reflecting the increased propensity of Hispanic individuals to report non-criminal incidents to the police. This finding would thus imply that PEP not only incentivized crime reporting, but also incentivized Hispanic individuals, who might have previously been hesitant to interact with law enforcement over non-criminal matters, to report these incidents to the police. One caveat to this interpretation is that it is possible that this estimate might be a combination of increased reporting as well as increased human activity (e.g., unauthorized individuals leaving the house more freely). If so, then the estimate would be an upper bound on the reporting effect associated with PEP for this type of events.

6.2. Increase in number of low-level offenses

Next, I consider low-level offenses (e.g., drunk and disorderly conduct, vandalism), which are the remaining 20 percent of total incidents. Table 3 shows a 5 percent increase in the number of these offenses reported by Hispanic complainants. Given PEP’s focus on detaining offenders of serious crimes, it is plausible that the new priorities might have decreased the likelihood of deportation for offenders of less serious crimes, thereby incentivizing unauthorized individuals to commit more low-level offenses. If so, then this 5 percent increase might reflect changes in reporting as well as increases in low-level offending.³⁵ Overall, though, this estimate suggests that the police were notified of around 700 more low-level offenses after the launch of PEP, likely driven by increased reporting, but potentially also by increased offending.

6.3. Changes in reporting by neighborhood type

Finally, I consider whether the effect differs between neighborhoods with more versus fewer unauthorized immigrants. Based on the conceptual framework in Section 3.1, it is not clear in which group of neighborhoods one would expect the effect to be bigger. On the one hand, neighborhoods with more unauthorized immigrants are those most affected by the policy change, and thus where I would expect to see a larger average change in the likelihood of deportation (and thus on the share of crimes reported). On the other hand, the effect on reporting

³⁵ In the parlance of Section 4.3, if both of the victimization terms in Eq. (5) are positive, and if the change in the number of victimizations is larger for Hispanic individuals than for non-Hispanic individuals (e.g., if unauthorized offenders tend to victimize Hispanic individuals), then the β_2 coefficient might reflect both a reporting as well as a victimization effect. For a lengthier discussion, I refer the reader to Online Appendix B.

might be tempered in these neighborhoods if their residents would prefer to keep law enforcement away from their communities (e.g., if they have greater numbers of criminal non-citizen contacts, or if they believe that the offender might be unauthorized and they factor that likelihood into their reporting decision).

To consider differences by neighborhoods along this dimension, I use Census tract-level data from the 2012–2016 American Community Surveys indicating the share of each tract’s population that is foreign-born non-citizens from Latin America (Manson et al., 2017). I split the tracts into those with above- and below-median shares of foreign-born non-citizens (10 percent of each tract). Online Appendix Table A4 shows that the two groups of neighborhoods experienced similar increases in the number of incidents with Hispanic complainants.³⁶

7. Ruling out alternative explanations

So far, I have found that the number of serious incidents reported by Hispanic individuals increased by roughly 4 percent after the introduction of PEP. However, if something besides individuals’ willingness to report crime changed at the same time that PEP was introduced, then I could be incorrectly attributing this rise in the number of complaints to increased willingness to report crime. In this section, I consider other possible explanations—increased criminal activity as well as population growth—that could result in more Hispanic individuals reporting incidents to the police.

7.1. Increases in criminal behavior

The Priority Enforcement Program is a particularly useful policy for studying crime reporting because it increases the incentives to report crime, without simultaneously increasing the incentives to commit serious crime. Given these features, we would not expect to see an increase in the amount of serious crime committed after the introduction of PEP. Nevertheless, in this subsection, I still consider the possibility that Hispanic offenders decided to commit more crimes at the time of PEP’s introduction, so that part of the increase in the number of Hispanic complaints I find is driven by an increase in criminal behavior (because Hispanic offenders often commit crimes against other Hispanic individuals).

To consider this possibility, I use arrests and suspects data from the Dallas Police Department to see whether Hispanic individuals seem to be committing more crime after PEP. In particular, I link arrest and suspects records to the incident-level data and focus only on the incidents reported by non-Hispanic complainants.³⁷ By focusing on white

³⁶ I also consider a different component of community trust in the police: changes in cooperative behavior, as proxied by changes in the official clearance rate (i.e., the share of reported incidents that were “closed” or “cleared by arrest”). Ex-ante, it is not clear if or how we should expect the clearance rate to change with the policy’s new priorities. On the one hand, the program might have increased community cooperation, thereby making it easier for the police to solve crimes. On the other hand, the program might have alerted the police to more offenses or changed the composition of crimes committed, without necessarily improving the police’s ability to solve them. Online Appendix Figure A3 shows that the clearance rate of incidents reported by Hispanics trended similarly to the clearance rate of incidents reported by non-Hispanics before and after PEP. These results—as well as those in Online Appendix Table A3—indicate that even though the DPD was informed of more incidents by Hispanic complainants after the launch of PEP, it was still able to clear a similar share of them in order to keep the official clearance rates comparable across ethnicities. This result mirrors the findings in Cox and Miles (2015) and Hines and Peri (2019), showing that the introduction of the Secure Communities program did not affect police’s clearance rates. An important caveat to this finding is that I am only considering the DPD’s official clearance rate. If we consider the overall clearance rate—i.e., the share of all (not just reported) incidents that were cleared—then it would likely be the case that this statistic increased for incidents with a Hispanic victim. In other words, by being alerted to more incidents than they would have been otherwise, the DPD was likely able to increase their overall clearance rate after the launch of PEP.

³⁷ Because most incidents are not resolved with an arrest, only 2–3% of them can be linked to arrests. In contrast, approximately 18% of DPD incidents have at least one suspect.

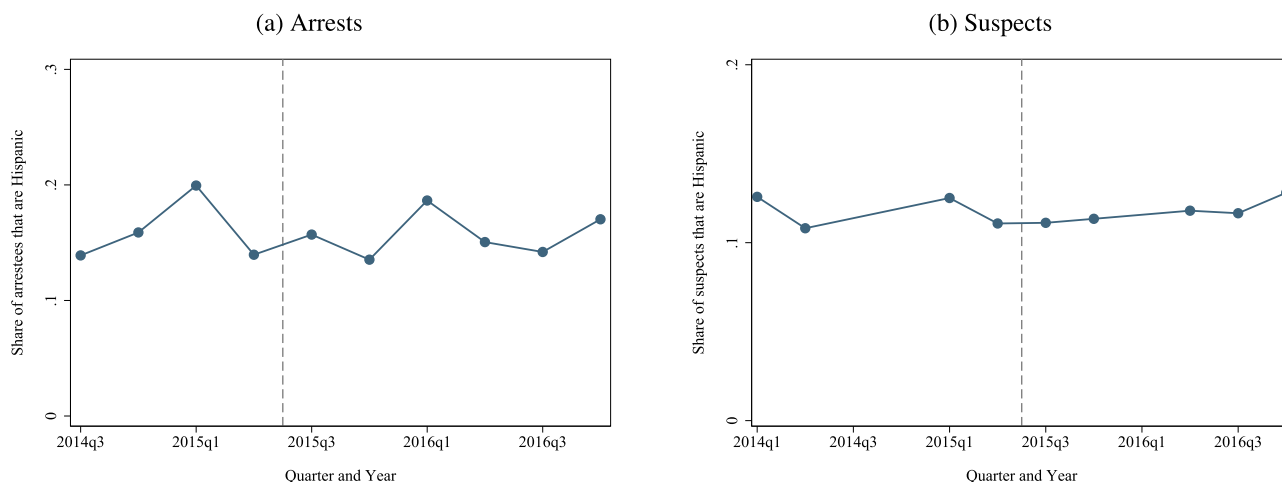


Fig. 3. Share of Arrestees and Suspects that are Hispanic for Incidents Reported by Non-Hispanics. *Note:* This figure plots the share of arrestees and suspects that are Hispanic using data from the Dallas Police Department. Both panels only consider arrestees and suspects that can be linked to incidents that were reported by non-Hispanic individuals in the incident-level data. Data are missing for some months in 2014 and 2016 due to changes in the DPD's Records Management System. Hispanic arrestees and suspects are identified using the race or ethnicity marked down by the DPD. The dashed gray lines indicate the launch of PEP. (For interpretation of the references to colour in their figure legend, the reader is referred to the web version of this article.)

and Black residents whose reporting incentives did not change with PEP, I can isolate changes in the criminal behavior of Hispanic individuals.³⁸ If the share of arrested or suspected individuals who are Hispanic increases after PEP for this subset of incidents, then this increase would suggest that Hispanic individuals were indeed committing more crime. Figure 3 shows that the share of arrestees and suspects who are Hispanic stays relatively constant after PEP.³⁹ These findings thus suggest that at least in Dallas, PEP achieved its intended goal of increasing trust in law enforcement without adversely impacting crime rates.^{40,41}

7.2. Population growth and other economic factors

The main findings suggest that Hispanic individuals reported more serious incidents to the police following the introduction of PEP. How-

³⁸ Even though focusing on crimes with non-Hispanic complainants reduces the group of offenses to select cases, it is the most direct way to identify changes in underlying criminal behavior. Focusing on all arrestees or all suspects will not shed light on criminal activity, as the overall number of arrestees/suspects will be a function of both crime reporting and criminal behavior. And, if there is assortative matching between Hispanic offenders and victims, then we might actually expect to see an increase in the number of Hispanic arrestees or suspects as a result of increases in reporting, without necessarily implying increases in underlying criminal activity.

³⁹ Online Appendix Figure A4 more formally tests whether the likelihood that an arrestee/suspect is Hispanic changes after PEP for incidents reported by non-Hispanic individuals. These results are consistent with Fig. 3, showing that the corresponding likelihoods remain relatively unchanged after the program's implementation.

⁴⁰ As an alternative way to consider underlying criminal behavior, I look at the number of incidents in the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS), which reflect the "true" trends in victimizations. Online Appendix Figure A5 shows that victimizations of Hispanic individuals did not outpace those of non-Hispanic individuals in the six quarters following PEP's introduction. These results indicate that Hispanic individuals were not being victimized more often after the launch of PEP.

⁴¹ When estimating the effect of PEP on the number of non-criminal incidents reported (Section 6.1), one concern is that PEP might have increased the amount of Hispanic residents' activity, so that the estimate combines both increases in reporting and in activity. To consider this possibility—and thus gain insight into the extent to which the estimates of crime reporting are biased upward for this group of incidents—I consider individuals who were arrested for traffic-related violations. By focusing on this subset of arrests, which are more likely to be officer-initiated and rely less on civilian reporting, I can more directly consider changes in the overall activity of Hispanic individuals. Online Appendix Figure A8 shows that, for this subset of arrests, the share and number of Hispanic arrestees does not increase after the introduction of PEP. This finding provides suggestive evidence that the increase in the number of non-criminal incidents reported is not driven by increased human activity, and instead reflects Hispanic residents' increased willingness to report non-criminal incidents to the police.

ever, if there was a large influx of Hispanic people into Dallas around this time, then part of the increase in the number of complaints could be driven by growth in the Hispanic population. Previous papers in the literature have indeed shown that migration choices can be responsive to immigration policy (Bohn et al., 2014). Online Appendix Figure A9 illustrates that the share of Hispanic individuals—and of low-educated Hispanic non-citizens in particular (i.e., the population that is most likely to be unauthorized; Amuedo-Dorantes and Bansak, 2012; East et al., 2018)—stays relatively unchanged between 2012 and 2016.⁴²

Finally, a similar threat to the identification of PEP's effect could be that "treatment" (i.e., being Hispanic) was correlated with other shocks occurring around the same time as PEP's introduction. To explore this possibility, Online Appendix Figure A9 shows the annual employment and poverty rates by Hispanic ethnicity in Dallas County as well as the aggregate unemployment rate in the corresponding metropolitan area (Ruggles et al., 2019; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2018). The results confirm that economic outcomes did not deviate differentially for Hispanic and non-Hispanic individuals around the launch of PEP.

8. Discussion

The empirical findings of this paper imply that more-targeted immigration policies can incentivize Hispanic individuals to report more incidents to the police. In terms of generalizing these results to other states and localities, it is important to acknowledge that even though PEP was a federal program, it was enforced at the local level by the Dallas County Sheriff's Office. In August of 2015, shortly after the introduction of PEP, Sheriff Lupe Valdez implemented a local policy, in which the Sheriff's Office reviewed each of ICE's detainer requests to ensure that only offenders of serious crimes would be detained.⁴³

Even though the local policy mirrored PEP's priorities, Sheriff Valdez received significant media attention after introducing these guide-

⁴² I confirm this finding by using student enrollment reports from the Texas Education Agency's Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS). Online Appendix Figure A8 shows that the share of students who are Hispanic in Dallas County and in the Dallas Independent School District stays relatively constant at 55% and 70%, respectively, between 2011 and 2017.

⁴³ The Dallas Morning News reported that the Sheriff introduced this policy after meeting with ICE officials as well as activists from the Texas Organizing Project, and that the policy was well-received by the activist group. See: "Activist group commends Dallas County Sheriff's Department for new policy." *The Dallas Morning News*. September 19, 2015.

lines.⁴⁴ Texas Governor Greg Abbott publicly criticized the Sheriff's policy and wrote a letter to Sheriff Valdez demanding that Dallas County unconditionally honor all ICE requests.⁴⁵ Sheriff Valdez responded to Governor Abbott's criticism by assuring him that she had not denied any of their requests in the first two months of the policy.⁴⁶

Given the amount of media attention surrounding the clash between the Sheriff and the Governor, it is possible that Hispanic individuals in Dallas were particularly well-informed about the change in the immigration enforcement environment. It is thus plausible that some Hispanic individuals were more willing to report incidents because of the Sheriff's new policy, rather than because of the federal program (even though on paper the two policies were essentially the same). Indeed, the introduction of this relatively salient local policy might play an important role in explaining the timing of the response (i.e., the increase in reporting beginning in the third quarter of 2015, as opposed to in late 2014 when the enforcement environment began to change).⁴⁷

Without similar administrative data from other cities, it is difficult to conclude whether the local enforcement of the new priorities contributed to the surge in crime reporting.⁴⁸ However, to the extent that this local policy played a role, then we might expect increases in reporting to be of different magnitudes in other cities, in accordance with the local salience of the immigration policy among the Hispanic population.⁴⁹ Nevertheless, the main take-away from the increase we see in Dallas seems to be that introducing immigration policies that shift enforcement attention away from individuals who do not pose a threat to public safety can serve as a way to improve trust between immigrants and law enforcement officials. Improving our understanding of how a policy's local salience can affect the magnitude of the subsequent community response is a fruitful avenue for future research.

9. Conclusion

In this paper, I study the launch of the Priority Enforcement Program and estimate the degree to which the program increased Hispanic individuals' willingness to report incidents to the police. The goal of PEP was to re-establish cooperation between local law enforcement and ICE that was lost during the height of the Secure Communities program. In order to do so, PEP restricted ICE's enforcement priorities to focus only on individuals who posed a threat to public safety, and not on individuals who had only committed immigration offenses. These narrower priorities therefore increased the incentives for immigrant victims to report crimes, without simultaneously increasing the incentives for offenders

⁴⁴ The Dallas Morning News published numerous articles between mid-September and mid-December, detailing the widespread support for and criticism of the Sheriff's new policy. A list of 2015 articles discussing PEP and immigration policy more broadly are listed in Online Appendix Table A5 (articles accessed via Newsbank's archives of *The Dallas Morning News*, 1984–2016).

⁴⁵ Following the Governor's letter, support for Sheriff Valdez grew with the hashtag #StandWithLupe. Both the Texas Democratic Party and its collegiate arm, the Texas College Democrats, released statements of support for the Sheriff. The latter group claimed that they "support [Sheriff Valdez] in her efforts to build a strong relationship between the Sheriff's department and the residents of Dallas County."

⁴⁶ The sheriff's spokesman noted, "ICE is familiar with our agreement and doesn't submit a detainer unless it falls into the upper two categories that are designated so in effect we have declined zero. See: "Dallas sheriff responds to Texas governor: All ICE detainees honored this year." *The Dallas Morning News*. October 26, 2015.

⁴⁷ In October of 2015, the Dallas director of the Texas Organizing Project claimed that the Sheriff's policy had "strengthened trust and safety in the community."

⁴⁸ In theory, one could do a similar analysis with data from the National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS). However, the variable for Hispanic ethnicity is often missing in this data and many states with large Hispanic populations (e.g., California, Florida) do not report incidents to this program.

⁴⁹ It is also worth noting that Dallas residents might be particularly well informed about changes in immigration enforcement policies (relative to other localities) because of the Dallas Police Department's Latino Community Outreach program. This initiative aims to provide Hispanic communities with resources and information: the program holds regular meetings (entirely in Spanish) and brings in speakers (e.g., Catholic Charities, the Mexican consulate) to talk about immigration laws and other relevant topics with community leaders and other attendees.

to commit serious crimes. Unlike other immigration policies that typically affect both victims and offenders, the introduction of this program allows me to directly estimate the effect of immigration enforcement on crime reporting.

Using incident-level data from the Dallas Police Department that contains the ethnicity of the complainant, I employ a difference-in-differences strategy to estimate the degree to which reporting by Hispanic complainants changed relative to reporting by non-Hispanic complainants in the same neighborhood. I find that after PEP was introduced, the number of serious incidents reported by Hispanic individuals increased by around 4 percent. The estimates imply that the Dallas Police Department was notified of around 1200 more violent and property crimes than it would have been otherwise. Moreover, because some criminal offenders might have been dissuaded from committing crime due to increased reporting, these figures are likely conservative estimates. The results are robust to a number of checks (including using the surname of the complainant to identify Hispanic ethnicity and alternative definitions of neighborhood), and I also rule out alternative explanations for this increase in reporting (namely, increased criminal behavior and population growth).

Overall, the findings of this paper suggest that lessening immigration enforcement of individuals who do not pose a threat to public safety (i.e., crime victims) can enhance levels of trust between immigrant communities and law enforcement, and thus increase immigrants' propensity to report incidents to the police. Quantifying the program's effect on underlying crime rates is beyond the scope of this paper and an important topic for future research. However, to the extent that increased reporting deterred offenders or helped law enforcement officials do their job more effectively, this paper provides evidence that tailored immigration policies can play a role in improving public safety and the effectiveness of police departments.

Supplementary material

Supplementary material associated with this article can be found, in the online version, at doi:10.1016/j.jue.2021.103395.

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