

Does Immigration Increase Crime?

Do migrants lead to an increase in crime rates in their host societies? This highly contentious issue has become a mainstay in the political debate and a lightning rod for the galvanization of populist movements, despite often lacking any empirical support. In this game-changing book, the authors examine what the existing data actually says, and provide their own novel evidence on the immigration-crime connection. Taking the unusual approach of analysing the subject from an economic perspective, the authors build on the pioneering work of Nobel Prize winner Gary Becker to construct their innovative arguments. By considering evidence from different countries, with a focus on establishing causal relationships, the authors are able to analyse not only if migrants do cause crime but also whether migration policies can play a role in shaping incentives for migrants to engage in crime. This book will appeal to students and academics across the social sciences, as well as citizens interested in this topical issue.

FRANCESCO FASANI is an Associate Professor at the School of Economics and Finance, Queen Mary University of London. He is a Research Affiliate at CEPR (Centre for Economic Policy Research) and a Research Fellow at CReAM (Centre for Research and Analysis of Migration) and IZA (Institute for the Study of Labor, Bonn).

GIOVANNI MASTROBUONI is Carlo Alberto Chair at the Collegio Carlo Alberto and Professor in Economics at the University of Turin, ESOMAS, and at the University of Essex. He is a research fellow at the Institute for the Study of Labor in Bonn and editor of the *The B.E. Journal of Economic Analysis and Policy*.

EMILY G. OWENS is a Professor in the Department of Criminology, Law, and Society and the Department of Economics at the University of California, Irvine. She is an associate editor of the *Journal of Quantitative Criminology*, a senior research fellow at the Police Foundation, and a fellow of the Academy of Experimental Criminology.

Cambridge University Press
978-1-108-49455-7 — Does Immigration Increase Crime?
Francesco Fasani , Giovanni Mastrobuoni , Emily G. Owens , Paolo Pinotti
Frontmatter
[More Information](#)

PAOLO PINOTTI is Endowed Associate Professor in Economic Analysis of Crime at the Department of Social and Political Sciences at Bocconi University. His other roles include Coordinator of Fondazione Rodolfo Debenedetti, Director of the CLEAN Unit on the economics of crime at the Baffi-Carefin Center, Senior Researcher at FBK-Irvapp.

Does Immigration Increase Crime?

Migration Policy and the Creation of the Criminal Immigrant

FRANCESCO FASANI

Queen Mary University of London

GIOVANNI MASTROBUONI

Collegio Carlo Alberto, University of Turin and University of Essex

EMILY G. OWENS

University of California, Irvine

PAOLO PINOTTI

Bocconi University and Fondazione Rodolfo Debenedetti



CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge University Press
978-1-108-49455-7 — Does Immigration Increase Crime?
Francesco Fasani , Giovanni Mastrobuoni , Emily G. Owens , Paolo Pinotti
Frontmatter
[More Information](#)

CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

University Printing House, Cambridge CB2 8BS, United Kingdom
One Liberty Plaza, 20th Floor, New York, NY 10006, USA
477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia
314–321, 3rd Floor, Plot 3, Splendor Forum, Jasola District Centre,
New Delhi – 110025, India
79 Anson Road, #06–04/06, Singapore 079906

Cambridge University Press is part of the University of Cambridge.

It furthers the University's mission by disseminating knowledge in the pursuit of education, learning, and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

www.cambridge.org

Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781108494557

DOI: 10.1017/9781108626286

© Francesco Fasani, Giovanni Mastrobuoni, Emily Owens, and Paolo Pinotti 2019

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements, no reproduction of any part may take place without the written permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 2019

Printed in the United Kingdom by TJ International Ltd, Padstow Cornwall

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library.

ISBN 978-1-108-49455-7 Hardback

ISBN 978-1-108-73177-5 Paperback

Cambridge University Press has no responsibility for the persistence or accuracy of URLs for external or third-party internet websites referred to in this publication and does not guarantee that any content on such websites is, or will remain, accurate or appropriate.

Contents

| | |
|--|-----------------|
| List of Figures | <i>page</i> vii |
| List of Tables | xi |
| Acknowledgements | xiii |
| | |
| Introduction | 1 |
| | |
| 1 Immigration and Crime: Perceptions and Reality | 9 |
| 1.1 Attitudes towards Migrants | 9 |
| 1.2 Regular and Irregular Migration: Perceptions and Reality | 15 |
| 1.3 Evidence from Incarceration Rates | 17 |
| 1.4 Trends in Immigration and Crime Rates | 19 |
| | |
| 2 Migration Policy and Crime in Italy | 26 |
| 2.1 Migration Policy in Italy | 26 |
| 2.2 Immigrants' Involvement in Crime | 33 |
| 2.3 Legal Status and Criminal Behaviour of Immigrants in Italy | 39 |
| | |
| 3 Immigration and Crime in the United Kingdom | 54 |
| 3.1 Introduction | 54 |
| 3.2 Immigration in the UK: Policy, Numbers, and Flows | 55 |
| 3.3 Crime Trends in the UK | 64 |
| 3.4 Immigrant Crime in the UK: Evidence from Prison Records | 66 |
| 3.5 Do Immigrants Cause Crime in the UK? | 74 |
| 3.6 Conclusions | 88 |

vi CONTENTS

| | | |
|-----|---|-----|
| 4 | The Case of the United States | 91 |
| 4.1 | Institutional Background | 92 |
| 4.2 | The 1917 Immigration Act | 113 |
| 4.3 | The 1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act | 122 |
| 4.4 | Conclusions | 126 |
| 5 | Refugee Waves and Crime: Evidence from EU Countries | 129 |
| 5.1 | Introduction | 129 |
| 5.2 | Refugees and Crime: Theory and Evidence | 133 |
| 5.3 | Data and Descriptive Statistics | 139 |
| 5.4 | Graphical Analysis | 141 |
| 5.5 | Empirical Strategy | 148 |
| 5.6 | Results | 151 |
| 5.7 | Concluding Remarks | 153 |
| | Conclusion | 156 |
| | Appendix 1: Italian Legislation on Immigration | 162 |
| | Appendix 2: Appendix Tables – Immigration and Crime in the United Kingdom (chapter 3) | 164 |
| | Appendix 3: Appendix Tables – Refugee Waves and Crime: Evidence from EU Countries (Chapter 5) | 174 |
| | References | 188 |
| | Index | 198 |

Figures

| | | |
|-----|--|----------------|
| 1.1 | Natives' concerns about immigration | <i>page</i> 10 |
| 1.2 | Percentage vote share of some anti-immigrant parties at European Parliament elections, 2004–14 | 12 |
| 1.3 | Concerns about the impact of immigrants on jobs, taxes, and crime rates | 13 |
| 1.4 | Crime rate concerns associated with regular and irregular immigrants | 14 |
| 1.5 | Share of regular and irregular immigrants over the total resident population | 16 |
| 1.6 | Information and concerns about excessive immigration | 16 |
| 1.7 | Immigrants' incarceration rates across countries | 18 |
| 1.8 | Trends in immigration and crime in the OECD, 2001–12 | 20 |
| 1.9 | Changes in crime rates and in immigrant populations over the period 2001–12 | 21 |
| 2.1 | Immigrant population in Italy, 1971–2014 | 27 |
| 2.2 | Estimates of undocumented immigrants, 1990–2010 | 32 |
| 2.3 | Percentage of foreigners among individuals charged for several types of crime | 34 |
| 2.4 | Trends in immigration and crimes, 1990–2013 (index = 1 in 1990) | 34 |
| 2.5 | Drug-related crimes and number of immigrants incarcerated for drug-related offences since 1991 (index = 1 in 1991) | 35 |
| 2.6 | Share of foreign-born population in the Italian judicial system, 1991–2011 | 37 |

viii LIST OF FIGURES

| | | |
|------|---|----|
| 2.7 | Share of foreign-born population, by age and gender, 2011 | 38 |
| 2.8 | Probability of receiving a sentence for Italians and immigrants, by age group, 2006 | 39 |
| 2.9 | Immigrant status and legal status of offenders, by type of crime | 40 |
| 2.10 | Over-representation of official and undocumented immigrants among offenders | 41 |
| 2.11 | Probability of committing a serious crime before and after click day | 46 |
| 2.12 | Immigrants' crime and amnesties, 1992–2005 | 48 |
| 3.1 | Immigration, emigration, and net immigration flows, 1980–2016 | 58 |
| 3.2 | Foreign-born residents and foreign nationals in the UK, 2000–17 | 60 |
| 3.3 | Foreign-born residents by area of origin, 2004–17 | 62 |
| 3.4 | Share of population aged 15–64 years with tertiary education in EU15 countries + Norway + Switzerland: natives and foreign born, 2015 | 64 |
| 3.5 | Trends in total CSEW crime and recorded crime, by offence group | 65 |
| 3.6 | UK prison population by nationality, 2002–16 | 67 |
| 3.7 | British and foreign nationals detained, by status, 2002, 2009, and 2016 | 70 |
| 3.8 | Prison population by sentence length: British and foreign nationals, 2016 | 71 |
| 3.9 | Foreign national detainees, share by area of origin, 2002–16 | 72 |
| 3.10 | European detainees, by macro-area, 2002–16 | 73 |
| 3.11 | Log crime rate and immigrant share: ten-year (2004–14) changes, by type of offence | 79 |
| 3.12 | Log crime rate and immigrant share: five-year (2004–09) changes, by type of offence | 80 |

| | | |
|------|--|-----|
| 3.13 | Log crime rate and immigrant share: five-year (2009–14) changes, by type of offence | 81 |
| 4.1 | Incarceration rates for natives and Asian immigrants, by age group, 1870–1910 | 98 |
| 4.2 | Incarceration rates (in %) for natives and immigrants, by age group, 1870–1920 | 100 |
| 4.3 | Example of a literacy test for potential immigrants | 101 |
| 4.4 | Incarceration rates (in %) for ‘old’ and ‘new’ immigrants, by age group, 1870–1940 | 104 |
| 4.5 | Incarceration rates (in %) for natives and Mexican immigrants, by age group, 1870–1980 | 107 |
| 4.6 | Incarceration rates (in %) for native and non-native men, by age (1870–1980), along with major immigration reforms | 113 |
| 4.7 | Illiteracy and incarceration rates | 116 |
| 4.8 | Initial illiteracy and changes in migrant population | 119 |
| 4.9 | Felony charges filed against Bexar County residents | 125 |
| 4.10 | Reporting rates of Hispanics and natives around the IRCA | 126 |
| 5.1 | Asylum applications (2014–16) and refugee population (2016) in EU15 countries | 130 |
| 5.2 | Major concerns about refugees in selected EU countries, 2016 | 132 |
| 5.3 | Property and drug crime: FR, DE, SE, UK, 1995–2016 | 142 |
| 5.4 | Property and drug crime: AT, DK, IT, NL, 1995–2016 | 142 |
| 5.5 | Homicide rate: FR, DE, SE, UK, 1995–2016 | 143 |
| 5.6 | Homicide rate: AT, DK, IT, NL, 1995–2016 | 143 |
| 5.7 | Refugees and property and drug crime: yearly changes in EU15 countries, 1995–2015 | 145 |

X LIST OF FIGURES

| | | |
|------|---|-----|
| 5.8 | Asylum seekers and property and drug crime: yearly changes in EU15 countries, 1995–2015 | 146 |
| 5.9 | Refugees and violent crime: yearly changes in EU15 countries, 1995–2015 | 147 |
| 5.10 | Asylum seekers and violent crime: yearly changes in EU15 countries, 1995–2015 | 148 |

Tables

| | | |
|------|---|----------------|
| 1.1 | Immigration and crime in OECD countries, 2002–13 | <i>page 24</i> |
| 2.1 | ISMU survey (2003–09), characteristics of documented and undocumented immigrants | 43 |
| 4.1 | Incarceration rates | 96 |
| 4.2 | Incarceration rates for foreign and native-born by Census year and illiteracy status | 115 |
| 4.3 | Incarceration rates and illiteracy rates by country of birth | 118 |
| 4.4 | Illiterate and incarceration regressions | 121 |
| A.1 | Countries of origin in 2000 and 2017 | 165 |
| A.2 | Foreign national inmates by area of origin in 2002 and 2016 | 166 |
| A.3 | European inmates: top ten nationalities in 2002 and 2016 | 167 |
| A.4 | Descriptive statistics | 168 |
| A.5 | Log crime rate and share of foreign-born population – first differences estimates | 169 |
| A.6 | Log crime rate and share of foreign nationals – first differences estimates | 170 |
| A.7 | Log crime rate and share of foreign-born population: before and after the 2008 financial crisis – first differences estimates | 171 |
| A.8 | Log crime rate and share of foreign-born population – instrumental variable estimates | 173 |
| A.9 | Asylum applications and refugee population (per 10,000 population) in EU15 countries | 175 |
| A.10 | Average crime rates in EU15 countries, by type of offence | 176 |

xii LIST OF TABLES

| | | |
|------|---|-----|
| A.11 | Property and drug crime and refugee population in EU15 countries – first differences estimates | 177 |
| A.12 | Property and drug crime and asylum applications in EU15 countries – first differences estimates | 179 |
| A.13 | Violent crime and refugee population in EU15 countries – first differences estimates | 181 |
| A.14 | Violent crime and asylum applications in EU15 countries – first differences estimates | 183 |
| A.15 | Crime rates and refugee population: the timing of the effect – first differences estimates | 185 |
| A.16 | Crime rates and asylum applications: the timing of the effect – first differences estimates | 186 |
| A.17 | Crime rates, refugees, and asylum applications in NMS13 countries – first differences estimates | 187 |

Acknowledgements

This research was possible thanks to generous funding from Fondazione Rodolfo De Benedetti. We thank the Italian Ministry of Interior for disclosing the data on residence permits and crime; Giancarlo Blangiardo (ISMU) for providing part of the data used in Chapter 2; and Josh Angrist, Randi Hjalmarsson, Stephen Machin, Nicola Persico, and Luigi Pistaferri for invaluable comments on an earlier draft of this work. We also thank Dimitrios Bermpoglou, Giammarco Cezza, Chiara Serra, Giulia Tagliaferri, and Giulia Tomaselli for excellent research assistance.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-49455-7 — Does Immigration Increase Crime?

Francesco Fasani , Giovanni Mastrobuoni , Emily G. Owens , Paolo Pinotti

Frontmatter

[More Information](#)
