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Immigrant Danger? Immigration and Increased Crime in Europe

In October and November of 2005, suburbs around France erupted. Pent-up tension in immigrant communities released itself in the form of 10,000 burned cars, large-scale protests, and clashes with police, eventually resulting in an official State of Emergency. The rioting went on for weeks, revealing the extent of the unrest and alienation felt by suburban immigrant communities living on the outskirts of cities, and the outskirts of French society. It was the most destructive rioting in France since World War II.[1] In the aftermath of these riots, immigration in France has taken a central role in the ongoing political debate regarding the future of the French welfare state. With presidential elections approaching, the front-runners on the left and right have made immigration a top issue. Other social leaders contribute to the hyperbole, and one far-right leader and presidential candidate, Jean-Marie Le Pen, has popularized an old U.S. anti-hippy slogan, adding a French twist: "France: Love it or leave it."[2]

The riots reignited wider discussions about crime in Europe, and, in particular, the criminality of immigrants. For many Europeans, in France and beyond, the rioting only confirmed fears that immigrants were inherently criminal, or at least more likely to commit crimes than their "more European" counterparts. The riots also focused attention on who is and is not an "immigrant" in today's Europe, with criminality generally being assigned to immigrants from North Africa, the Middle East, and other non-EU countries. As one scholar puts it:

> Thus people's attitudes towards immigration and immigrants (and ethnic minorities) are such that
> immigrants are now seen as contributing to instability and violence (either actively as offenders or
> passively as violence-provoking victims); or as exploiting host countries and host societies (either through

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[1] Jamey Keaten, Associated Press, 8 November, 2005, "State of Emergency declared in France," retrieved from http://www.breitbart.com/news/2005/11/08/D8DOBC40M.html on 3 May, 2006.
[2] Gerard Bon, Reuters, as printed in the Washington Post, 1 May 2006, "Le Pen says anti-immigrant views gaining in France," retrieved from http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/05/01/AR2006050100486.html on 3 May, 2006.

the marketing of illicit goods and services or through living on social security and property crime). This

view is re-enforced through other signs of disintegration and conflict as displayed by immigrant groups –

particularly their high share of unemployment, which makes immigrants (especially immigrants from non-

EU countries) a social group evidently living at the margins of societies. Unemployment rates among non-

UE immigrants are at least double those among the majority group (Muus 2001: 45). (Albrecht 2002)[3]

The societal perception linking immigrants and criminality is not new. For more than a

century, scientists have attempted to either prove or disprove a biological or social link between

immigrant status and criminal behavior. Such studies are complicated by a variety of factors,

and always take place against a highly-charged political backdrop. It's therefore difficult to

separate fact from fiction surrounding immigrants and crime. However, several recent scholars

have done substantial empirical work examining the role of immigration in crime, with

implications for how we think about long-term social change.

In this paper, I will outline some of these studies, and attempt to locate them in the

context of recent long-term empirical work done by Manuel Eisner, Pieter Spierenburg, Eric

Monkkonen, and others. I will also analyze whether any of these studies can explain recent

increases in crime, and especially in interpersonal violence in Europe. As I will explain below,

interpersonal violence in Europe is on downward trend over the very long-term, but has been

increasing over the last few decades. Over the same period immigration in Europe took place at

unprecedented levels, and in changing ways. Might the two phenomena be linked? What can

studies about immigration, crime, and violence tell us about the way societies (to borrow a term

from Norbert Elias) become more or less "civilized?" I attempt to explore these questions here.

I will begin by outlining relevant empirical findings on homicide and violence trends in Europe,

drawing heavily on Eisner's massive data-collection effort. Next, I will explore four

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[3] Hans-Jorg Albrecht, "Immigration, crime and unsafety," *Crime and Insecurity: The Governance of Safety in Europe*, Adam Crawford, Ed., Willan Publishing: Portland, Oregon, 2002, p. 169.

immigration-centered hypotheses that might explain increasing violent crime rates in Europe. I will conclude with an effort to fit these hypotheses into the larger context of major social theories – specifically, Elias's "civilizing process."

Trends in European Crime

It appears that over the very long term – the past 500 years or so – homicide rates in Europe are decreasing. Manuel Eisner assembled a massive database of homicide data for Europe, consisting of data points across several centuries. He finds a "Europe-wide massive drop – roughly by a factor of 10:1 to 50:1 over the period from the fifteenth to the twentieth century – in lethal interpersonal violence."[4]

However, Eisner's database shows not just the huge decrease in European homicide over the past 500 years, but also an intriguing modern trend: "By around 1950, most European countries experienced their lowest historically known levels of homicide rates. Since then, an increasing trend has prevailed."[5] Eisner calls this the "U-shaped pattern," and notes that T.R. Gurr and others had identified it in earlier research. The "U shape" refers to the shape of a linear graph of European homicide rates for a 120 year span, in which rates start out high, drop to a low point around 1950 (the "benchmark for the lowest level of interpersonal violence as yet attained in any known Western society"), and then increase until at least the 1990s.[6] Marcelo Aebi, looking at Western Europe specifically for the period 1990 to 2000, finds continued increases in homicide through the end of the twentieth century, as well as increases in other forms of interpersonal violence (see Table 2).[7]
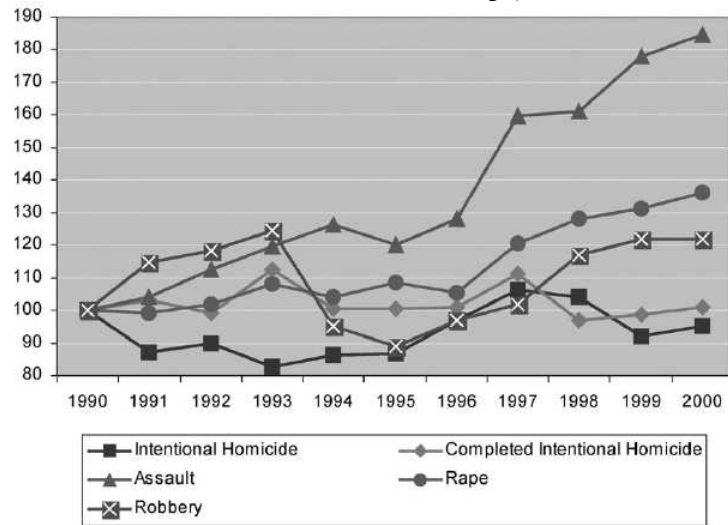
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[4] Manuel Eisner, "Long-Term Historical Trends in Violent Crime," University of Chicago 2003, p. 88.
[5] Eisner 2003, p. 88.
[6] Eisner 2003, p. 106.
[7] Marcelo Aebi, "Crime Trends in Western Europe from 1990 to 2000," *European Journal on Criminal Policy and Research*, Vol. 10, 2004, p. 168.

Table 1: Violence Trends in Western Europe, Relative to 1990 Levels (from Aebi 2004)

Such an upswing presents difficulties for modern theories of homicide, such as Elias's civilizing process. Broadly stated, Elias predicts a gradual but consistent decrease in interpersonal violence, a trend that should continue as states form and stabilize, and as individuals within the state become more interdependent and self-controlling. What are we to make of this modern upswing in European homicide? Eisner doesn't provide an answer, beyond the suggestion that this might be a temporary blip on the radar – one of many ebbs and floods in homicide rates, but one that is dwarfed by the overall downward trend. "The well-documented increase in criminal violence between the 1950s and the early 1990s may well be just one of several periods in which violence rates increased over several decades."[8] This is far from a satisfying answer, as Eisner himself would likely agree. As his database is parsed and refined, we shall no doubt gain even more insight about the nature of this upswing.

Immigration and Criminality

In the meantime, I shall examine here one possible source of the upswing in violent crime in Europe: immigration. Could the upward trend be related to the contemporaneous massive

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[8] Eisner 2003, p. 106.

influx of "outsiders" into the nations that now comprise the European Union? Can immigration on a large scale explain the increase in crime – specifically in interpersonal violence and homicide?

There are reasons to believe that this may in fact be the case in Europe. In this section, I will look at four ways in which immigration might drive up the crime rate, and will discuss their merits as explanatory hypotheses for Europe's recent upward trend in violence. Because of well-known difficulties in comparing crime statistics and making sense of standardized definitions of "crime," and agreeing with Spierenburg and Monkkonen that "murder is more than just an index to itself," I will focus primarily on violent crime and homicide.[9] In some cases, data on homicide may not be available, in which case I will refer to overall crime data, with the converse assumption that trends in crime (especially violent crime) are indicative of trends in homicide.

Hypothesis 1: Immigrants are More Likely to be Criminal

It is a common belief among natives of a country that "outsiders," "foreigners," and "immigrants" constitute a more criminal class than do the natives. In Italy during the 1990s, it was not at all uncommon to hear complaints from native Italians that crime (specifically homicide) in Italy was rising, but that it was rising because of the *stranieri*, the foreigners living in Italy. Is this because non-Italians, or non-EU immigrants, are simply more likely to commit criminal acts?

These kinds of questions are not particularly new, as I discovered while researching the issue, though the farther back in time one goes, the more the scholarship focuses on American immigration. This is in part due to the fact that last half of the twentieth century presented a very different immigration dynamic in Europe than did the first half, with the huge influx of newcomers being an artifact of a constellation of events, including the end of World War II, the

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[9] Spierenburg 2006, p. 104.

Cold War partitioning of Europe, the fall of Communism and the Soviet Empire, and the formation of an open-border European Union. Since this type of European immigration is therefore relatively new, it may be useful to examine how immigration and crime were linked in the United States by early American social scientists.

A 1915 issue of the Journal of the American Institute of Criminal Law and Criminology contained a report aimed at testing the following three hypotheses:

1. That the volume of crime in the United States is disproportionately increased by immigration and that, in consequence, to reduce crime immigration must be reduced.

2. That because of racial and environmental differences the kinds of crime committed and the temptations which lead to these crimes differ in the case of the immigrant and of the native born of native parentage and that any program for crime prevention must be adjusted to meet these differences.

3. That the foreign born are not given the same opportunity to secure justice as are the native born and that a special program for their protection is therefore necessary. (Abbot 1915)[10]

The report, incidentally, found that, contrary to widespread public opinion, immigrants were actually underrepresented in crime, and it went on to make several relatively progressive recommendations (including interpreters and public defenders for non-English speaking immigrants). But of most interest here are the questions being asked. Do immigrants increase crime? Are immigrants more likely to commit crimes because of their race or cultural provenance? Are immigrants unfairly victimized? These questions have been around for a long while.

Later, in 1931, the National Commission on Law Observance and Enforcement (also referred to as the Wickersham Commission), formed by President Herbert Hoover, took up the issue of immigrants and crime. The report "concluded that the arrest, conviction, and

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[10] Grace Abbot, "Immigration and Crime (Report of Committee 'G' of the Institute)," Journal of the American Institute of Criminal Law and Criminology, Vol. 6, Num. 4, November 1915, p. 522.

commitment rates of the foreign-born were generally lower than the rates for the native whites

for various crimes…"[11] As a consequence of studies like these, in subsequent decades the tide

began to turn against eugenics, at least among social scientists. A consensus among scholars

began to emerge, in contrast with the eugenic and racist theories of the past, that the question of

the immigrant and crime ought to be determined by an appeal to statistics, and not the paranoia

and xenophobia of the popular psyche.

But almost a century later, scholars are still asking much the same questions. Race-based

theories of crime have been all but abandoned by social scientists. But in their place, modern

criminology provides many reasons to believe that crime among immigrants, including

homicide, should still be disproportionately high. Ramiro Martinez, Jr. and Matthew Lee offer

an intriguing summary of the body of scholarship that deals with the presumed link between

immigration and crime. They group such theories into three categories: *opportunity structure*,

cultural approaches, and *social disorganization*. Theories of crime that focus on opportunity

structure would predict higher crime rates among immigrants. "Because legitimate opportunities

for wealth and social status are not equally available to all groups, some will "innovate" by

taking advantage of available illegitimate opportunities."[12] Theories that make use of cultural

approaches would also predict higher immigrant crime. These theories are wide ranging, but, to

make a gross simplification, the general idea is that immigrants are subject to a different set of

cultural forces than native populations, and that these forces can perpetuate a "culture of

violence" or "culture of crime." They also include the notion of "culture conflict," or the idea

that the norms and values of immigrants are bound to come into conflict with the norms and

values of the dominant native population. Social disorganization theories likewise predict higher

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[11] C.C. Van Vechten, "The Criminality of the Foreign Born," *Journal of Law and Criminology (1931-1951)*, Vol. 32, Num. 2, July-August 1941, p. 144.
[12] Ramiro Martinez, Jr. and Matthew T. Lee, "On Immigration and Crime," *Criminal Justice*, Vol. 1, 2000, p. 488.

crime among immigrants, primarily because of the likelihood that immigrants will settle in disorganized communities – in other words, in communities where social institutions that control individual behavior through group norms and rules are weakening due to social change. As those institutions break down, individuals are more likely to commit crimes, and immigrants are not immune to this influence.

Having surveyed the various theories that fit into these three categories, and agreeing that they all indicate an expected overrepresentation of immigrants in crime, Ramirez and Lee reach a surprising conclusion, but one in line with previous studies of immigration and crime: "immigrants are generally less involved in crime than similarly situated groups, despite the wealth of prominent criminological theories that provide good reasons why this should not be the case (e.g. residence in disorganized neighborhoods, acculturation difficulties, conflicts between cultural codes)."[13] Making their own empirical contribution to the literature, they also reveal their findings in a study of homicide in El Paso, Miami, and San Diego, cities characterized by high immigration. Once again, they conclude that immigrants do not create a disproportionate increase in homicide. "Despite these and other reasons to expect high levels of immigrant crime, the bulk of empirical studies conducted over the past century have found that immigrants are usually underrepresented in criminal statistics."[14] In the American case, then, *evidence consistently indicates that immigration does not increase homicide*.

Keeping American studies in mind, I now turn to the work of scholars on European immigration and crime. Here, the literature is much more contentious and politically charged. In fact, a review of the literature makes it clear that good scholarship on this issue is difficult to do. First of all, in a modern European world haunted by the ghosts of genocide, the issue of

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[13] Ramirez and Lee 2000, p. 501.
[14] Ramirez and Lee 2000,p .514-515.

immigration is so politically "hot" that scholars may understandably be reluctant to make claims or even report data that might be construed as racist or hateful[15]. Secondly, scholars are aware that their findings may be used by nationalist politicians or interest groups to further incite hatred and mistreatment of immigrants. Furthermore, good data on immigration and crime are hard to come by. Some countries forbid the recording of race in arrest records and official statistics (in an effort to combat racism). Others record race differently, or define crimes differently, in a way that makes cross-national comparison difficult. In addition the disparity in immigration policies across Europe results in wide variation in the legal status of immigrants, even between similarly situated countries. Thus, some countries will jail, detain, or imprison more immigrants than other countries, for reasons that have little or nothing to do with violent crime or homicide.

But setting aside these difficulties, scholars are not silent on the issue. Michael Tonry begins an essay with this provocative sentence: "Members of *some* disadvantaged minority groups in every Western country are disproportionately more likely to be arrested, convicted, and imprisoned for violent, property, and drug crimes."[16] Tonry pays tribute to the American scholarship on immigrants and crime, but wishes to place it in the context of a larger social issue that plagues "every Western country." Immigrants on the whole may not be more likely to *commit* crimes, but some immigrant groups seem more likely than others to be *punished* for crimes. How do we explain this? With this in mind, he introduces another body of scholarship that complicates the issue of crime and immigration in Europe: research on organized crime. I turn now to a hypothesis based on observations made by scholars working in this vein.

Hypothesis 2: Immigration and Organized Crime are Linked

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[15] This was certainly true of Sweden in the 1980s and early 1990s, perhaps to an extreme degree, but is generally true of Western Europe in general. See: Martens 1997.

[16] Michael Tonry, "Ethnicity, Crime and Immigration: Comparative and Cross-National Perspectives," *Crime and Justice*, Vol. 21, University of Chicago Press, 1997, p. 1.

Much has been written about the role of organized crime in driving up crime rates in Europe, including drug offenses, sex crimes, assaults, and homicide. Though it is not always the case, organized crime is generally perceived by citizens and governments as a foreign or alien entity – an outside force, working within a state. As in America, organized crime in Europe as perceived as being Sicilian, Chinese, Japanese or Russian Mafia, and thus the organized crime debate is not complete without a discussion of immigration. Nor is the immigration debate complete without a discussion of organized crime.

While these perceptions are not always correct, it's not difficult to see why they exist. First, American characterizations of organized crime in popular media (i.e. *The Godfather*, *Scarface*, *Goodfellas*, etc.) and in social science and legal publications have been influential on Europeans. But perhaps more interestingly, the nature of modern organized crime in Europe has changed in ways that give it a foreign face. Edward Kleemans observes that organized crime in the Netherlands does not subscribe to the traditional model, in which criminal syndicates gain total control of legitimate sectors of business, organs of government, or legal channels. Instead, he writes that:

> In the case studies, there was hardly any evidence of protection, political corruption, illegal manipulation of political decisions, or infiltration in trade unions. Rather than controlling certain regions or certain sectors of the economy, criminal groups seem to join in with the legal infrastructure as well as with the legal commodity and money flows. (Kleemans 2004)[17]

Organized crime, then, works in what is often referred to as a "shadow economy," dealing in illegitimate businesses and trades. Kleemans notes that these types of illegitimate activities are often international smuggling of one form or another, be it drugs, weapons, people, or property.

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[17] Edward Kleemans, "Crossing Borders: Organized Crime in the Netherlands," *Organized Crime in Europe: Concepts, Patterns and Control Policies in the European Union and Beyond*, Cyril Fijnaut and Letizia Paoli, Eds., Springer: The Netherlands, 2004, p. 307.

Indeed, he writes that "[t]he nature of organized crime in the Netherlands might be described as 'transit crime' – criminal groups in the Netherlands are primarily involved in international illegal trade…"[18]

Given that these activities are so international in scope, and are internationally staffed, it's not surprising that organized crime in the Netherlands, and beyond, is perceived as a foreign influence. In the case of human trafficking, the humans being smuggled are "immigrants," and, many times, so are the smugglers. Kleemans also finds that organized crime in the Netherlands is not the hierarchical, top-down empire that it is often associated with. Rather, he describes a social criminal network, in which some nodes are more important than others. These networks consist of people who are socially connected. "Time and time again," he writes, "we find that family, friends and acquaintances work together and provide each other with introductions to third parties (Kleemans et al., 1998, 2002)."[19] Given the likelihood that families and social networks stick closely together in these crime networks, combined with the relative isolation of ethnic minorities and immigrants in Europe, it is not surprising that those networks take on an ethnic or social dimension. In other words, the structure of the networks dictates that they will propagate themselves along social lines, and to the extent that those social networks largely consist of members of one nationality or a set of ethnicities, the criminal networks will mirror that composition. Kleemans makes it clear that ethnicity is not the key trait defining these criminal networks:

> It is not ethnicity that matters, but the fact that people are family or originate from the same village or the same region. This applies to both immigrant and native offenders. As ethnicity affects social relations, a

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[18] Kleemans 2004, p. 307.
[19] Kleemans 2004, p. 309.

certain degree of ethnic homogeneity is to be expected. Ethnicity, however, is not the key defining feature

of the criminal groups that have been analysed in our research project. (Kleemans 2004)[20]

Thus, Kleemans has outlined one way in which organized crime in the Netherlands, and likely in

the EU, takes on an ethnic dimension in an indirect way, as a result of the structure of the

criminal networks that have gained much ground across Europe.

Might these criminal networks, consisting largely of international (foreign) actors, drive

up violent crime and homicide rates in Europe? Kleemans, and others, have pointed out that the

activities of these organized crime networks are primarily trade and smuggling, not murder. It

seems fairly likely that the growth of organized crime would bring with it a concurrent growth in

crime, and even in violence, but not necessarily a significant increase in murder rates. If such a

link exists, it has not yet been empirically demonstrated.

A second, largely unquantified way in which immigration and organized crime might

drive up overall European crime rates, including homicide rates, is through the disproportionate

victimization of immigrants. There is evidence to suggest that some immigrants become victims

of violence at the hands of organized crime much more often than their native-born

contemporaries. Here, I am speaking mainly of immigrants who enter a host country extralegally

(without documentation, or with forged documentation), or, in some cases, through legitimate

means (like asylum claims) that may have been facilitated through illegitimate methods (through

corrupt officials or criminal networks). These immigrants are in a particularly vulnerable

position, generally arriving in their host country without financial resources, unable to speak the

new language, isolated from friends and support networks, and indebted to criminal actors or

networks that facilitated their entry into the country. Investigators have documented the use of

violence against such immigrants as a means of extracting payment for "services rendered,"

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[20] Kleemans 2004, p. 310.

often forcing the immigrants into a form of "indentured servitude," in which they are required to work in given trade or market (sex or drug activities), giving the profits to a criminal ringleader until their debt is paid (if indeed it ever is).[21]

Much, if not most, of this violence is unlikely to show up on official police and government records. However, it might show up in homicide rates, particularly in coroners' reports, which may not be subject to the underreporting that is endemic to violent crimes against immigrants. Granted, there may be difficulties in determining the ethnicity and, even more difficult, the national origin and place of birth of homicide victims, especially when relatives or friends are unable or unwilling to talk with government authorities. Still, if these difficulties can be overcome, data may show that immigrants are disproportionately more likely to be the victims of homicides, particularly at the hands of international crime networks. If this is true, then it may indeed be the case that immigration in Europe drives up the homicide rates, though not in the manner generally conceived. Clearly more research is needed, but it seems likely that Europe's new organized crime, with its foreign and "immigrant" participants, must play a role in driving up Europe's overall crime rates.

Hypothesis 3: "Second Generation Immigrants" are more Criminal

As discussed earlier, the literature on immigration and crime for at least the last 100 years is full of references to the notion that, while first-generation immigrants may not be particularly criminal, their children are. Consider a typical statement:

> If we move to crimes committed by foreigners in their host country, where they are permanently living, we find well-known results. The first generation…extremely prone to criminality is hardly to be found in the records. This picture deteriorates in the second and third generation… (Kuhne 2002)[22]

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[21] See: Jo Goodey, "Whose Insecurity? Organised crime, its victims and the EU," *Crime and Insecurity: The Governance of Safety in Europe*, Adam Crawford, Ed., Willan Publishing: Portland, Oregon, 2002, p. 135-158.

Although many investigators write about this phenomenon, it is difficult to find empirical data to

prove its existence. Still, it seems likely to be the case. Modern sociological and criminological

theory, like Merton's "strain theory," predicts that criminal activity will increase when a group is

subjected to conflicting pressures to obtain material goods or social status that are not accessible

to them through legitimate means. In the case of second and third generation immigrants, it is

not difficult to imagine that these youth become so disenchanted with their host country, and so

embittered by their observations of the gap between their social status and the status of their

native-born peers, that they become hostile to the host country's regime of control. They

become more accepting of illegitimate means to obtain material success, and less resistant to

violence. Labeling theory also predicts similar results. Since second and third generation

immigrants grow up in their host country, exposed to the widespread popular belief that they are,

in fact, more likely to be criminal than their native born peers, they may actually adopt that

stigma, and begin to embody it.

Theoretically, then, it's not difficult to see how the children of immigrants might become

more criminal, and therefore drive up Europe's overall crime rate. In practice, however, it can be

difficult to prove a link to homicide rates. One of the most-cited authors on this subject is Hans-

Jorg Albrecht. In his well-known analysis of crime in Germany, he addressed the issue of

second and third generation immigrant crime. Albrecht reported that, between 1984 and 1993,

the crime rate among guest workers (the "foreign labor force") was relatively stable, whereas

"the crime rate among young foreigners more than doubled".[23] These crimes consist primarily of

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[22] Hans-Heiner Kuhne, "Culture Conflict and Crime in Europe," *Migration, Culture Conflict and Crime*, Joshua Freilich, Graeme Newman, S. Giora Shoham, and Moshe Addad, Eds., Athenaeum Press, Ltd.: Burlington, Virginia, 2002, p. 93.
[23] Hans-Jorg Albrecht, "Ethnic Minorities, Crime, and Criminal Justice in Germany," *Crime and Justice*, Vol. 21, *Ethnicity, Crime and Immigration: Comparative and Cross-National Perspectives*, University of Chicago Press, 1997, p. 55.

property crimes. However, one study followed a birth cohort of individuals living in Germany and born in 1970, and found that 7% of the foreign males in the cohort had committed a violent crime (including homicide, but also rape, robbery, or assault) by their 18th birthday, as opposed to only 2% of German-born males.[24] Such findings indicate that first and second generation immigrants may be overrepresented in homicide statistics.

Another study examining deviance rates among Swiss youth found similar overrepresentation of the children of immigrants in crime. Alexander Vazsonyi and Martin Killias observe that "Switzerland's recent problems with crime, especially with violence, seem to be related to increasing offending rates among juveniles in general and young immigrants in particular."[25] Citing others, they report that:

> [I]n his analysis of police data, Eisner (1997, 1998) found substantially increasing crime trends, particularly among youth of immigrant background. This is consistent with national police statistics that show, particularly for the last few years, substantial increases in crimes committed by foreign nationals (adults of whom many are without residence in the country) and juveniles residing in Switzerland (Polizeiliche Kriminalstatistik, 1998). (Vazsonyi and Killias 2001)[26]

Vazsonyi and Killias performed their own empirical study in the form of a series of written interviews given to youth ages 15-19 studying at Swiss schools. Applying a series of sophisticated statistical techniques, they found that second generation immigrant youth consistently accounted for the largest share of total deviance.[27] Some of these deviant acts include violence.

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[24] Albrecht 1997, p. 57.
[25] Alexander Vazsonyi and Martin Killias, "Immigration and Crime Among Youth in Switzerland," *Criminal Justice and Behavior*, Vol. 28, Num. 3, June 2001, p. 331.
[26] Vazsonyi and Killias 2001, p. 331.
[27] Vazsonyi and Killias 2001, p. 356.

Table 2: Percentage of youth participating in deviant acts, by immigrant status (Vazsonyi and Killias 2001 p. 347)

Deviant Behavior	Male (n = 1,916)				Female (n = 1,151)			
	Swiss (n = 1,412)	Second Generation (n = 337)	First Generation (n = 212)	p	Swiss (n = 909)	Second Generation (n = 180)	First Generation (n = 62)	p
Smash bottles	68.5	73.0	62.7	.050	33.6	37.2	33.7	ns
Drink hard liquor	70.4	73.2	62.9	ns	57.2	60.7	51.6	ns
Drink alcohol	82.7	80.8	69.5	.001	72.7	74.2	65.1	ns
Use soft drugs	52.6	56.2	45.9	.000	38.9	47.5	37.1	ns
Use hard drugs	12.0	15.0	20.6	.018	5.3	6.1	1.6	ns
Steal (minor)	62.7	66.4	49.0	.004	42.4	52.2	38.7	ns
Steal (major)	17.5	23.6	20.9	ns	3.3	5.6	.0	ns
Hit another person	68.5	68.9	65.9	ns	45.1	45.6	33.9	ns
Beat up person (medical attention)	18.5	31.4	30.7	.000	3.2	7.8	1.6	.001
Use a weapon (for a fight)	18.6	24.8	21.6	.028	2.5	5.0	3.2	.011

NOTE: Numbers in this table represent the percentage of students in each group who answered that they have participated in this activity.

The Swiss study is revealing, but it does not provide clear insight into violent crime and homicide. For obvious reasons, since the study mechanism was a voluntary questionnaire, homicide was not captured as a deviant act. Second, the sample consisted only of youth in school between the ages of 15 and 19. Since children in Switzerland are not required to attend school after age 15, this study doesn't tell us anything about the population of youth theoretically most likely to participate in homicide: those who are not in school, who are poor, disconnected with peers, uneducated, and unemployable. Thus, actual violent crime among second generation Swiss immigrants is likely to be much higher.

There are reasons to believe that similar forces are at work in France. The riots of the fall of 2005 in the banlieues (the French suburbs where the rioting was most intense) certainly give that impression. As one author puts it:

> The banlieues are the natural cradle for ethnic tensions. It is impossible to ignore immigration as a key
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> issue in the banlieues with a youth population with foreign origins often over 40% and sometimes closer to

> 90% when focusing on a subneighborhood level. [...] The various polls clearly present the banlieues as
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> places where residents are fearful for their security. (Roche' 2002)[28]

Such conditions do not necessarily cause increased violence and homicide rates, but they

certainly create the conditions in which crime is known to proliferate. The picture emerging in

Europe is increasingly one of a new and growing "underclass" of young immigrants and the

children of immigrants, alienated by their host nations, discontented with their status, and less

accepting of the legitimacy of the state and its institutions that their native-borne peers.

Albrecht, repeating his finding that immigration is not directly related to most kinds of crime,

concludes one article by stating that "[c]rimes committed by second- or third-generation

immigrants reflect precarious economic and social conditions as well as the fact that the

immigrants of the 1960s and 1970s (as well as their offspring) have moved into positions once

held by the (national) underclass."[29]

Indeed, even the language we use when talking about "second and third generation

immigrants" is revealing, since the use of such terminology indicates an implied failure of the

host nations to integrate youth born within their borders (had they been integrated, they would

not be referred to as "immigrants"). Since the children of immigrants so often fail to integrate

with the dominant native society, social tension is inevitable. Crime rates are likely to rise, and,

one might assume, so will homicide.

Hypothesis 4: Immigrants Bring Conflict with Them

Is it possible that peace in Europe actually increased crime? On the surface, this question

may seem absurd. However, one must consider the changing nature of war and conflict in

Europe (as well as across the globe). With the breakup of the Soviet Union, and the fall of

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[28] Sebastian Roche', "Towards a new governance of crime and insecurity in France," *Crime and Insecurity: The Governance of Safety in Europe*, Adam Crawford, Ed., Willan Publishing: Portland, Oregon, 2002, p. 220-221.
[29] Albrecht 2002, p. 177.

former Soviet protectorates, Europe cleared the way for a peaceful, and united, future. One by

one, dictators fell, either by force or decay. With the end of the wars in the Balkans, Europe is

left with only one dictatorial holdout – Belarus, home of what U.S. Secretary of State

Condoleezza Rice calls "the last true dictatorship in Europe."[30]

But these changes in Europe have had another effect. Borders have become much more

porous, and the prosperous liberal democracies of the ideological West have seen an influx of an

incapacitated and devastated stream of immigrants from the East. This is a small example of

much larger changes in the dynamics of immigration. Much has been written about the changes

in the reasons for immigration. Asylum-seekers (as opposed to foreign labor) are far more

common than in previous decades. Furthermore, as former colonial European powers withdrew

from their far-flung territories, they left in their wake power vacuums and destabilized

governments. Today, many of Europe's immigrants come from those former colonies, which, in

many cases, are ravaged by war, disease, and famine.

The effect of this change in the dynamics of immigration is not entirely known. Indeed,

it is incredibly difficult to study. However, whatever the full extent of such changes, there are

reasons to believe that the modern immigration dynamic would drive up crime rates in host

nations, including violent crime rates. Vazsonyi and Killias observe:

> In addition, illegal immigration and abuse of asylum seekers' status became much more frequent in recent
>
> years, particularly after the beginning of the war in former Yugoslavia. Thus, an increasing proportion of
>
> foreign nationals registered as offenders in Swiss data are indeed not immigrants in the classic sense, but
>
> often come to the country with the prevailing project of committing certain criminal offenses (Killias,
>
> 1997). This increasing role of transnational crime may indeed offer a possible explanation of the absence of

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[30] Nick Paton Walsh, "Europe's 'last dictator' defies calls for change," Guardian Unlimited, 6 May 2006, retrieved from http://www.guardian.co.uk/russia/article/0,2763,1477717,00.html on 7 May, 2006.

major decreases in crime in Switzerland and in Western Europe in general over the last few years.

(Vazsonyi and Killias 2001)[31]

In addition to the Swiss example, Sweden also offers valuable insight into this phenomenon. In 1992, after the breakup of Yugoslavia, Sweden accepted more than 80,000 refugees. Almost 70,000 of them were from the territories of what used to be Yugoslavia.[32] When immigrants come from nations plagues by war, are they more likely to commit crimes? Peter Martens observes that "persons who come from countries at war have been found to be relatively prone to react violently in conflict situations, particularly when these persons themselves have taken an active part in the war as soldiers."[33] Furthermore, people from such countries may suffer physical or psychological trauma as a result of their experiences in their native countries, and those traumas may be exacerbated by the immigration experience. Additionally, cultures in conflict at home may bring their conflicts with them to their host nation, resulting in inter-immigrant crime.

Martens does find some support for these ideas in Sweden, but stops short of making a causal statement tying the conditions in immigrants' country of origin with their rate of criminal activity in Sweden. He does, however, rank the levels of crime for the various nationalities, finding that immigrants from Arab countries (including North African nations) and Chile have the highest rates, followed by Eastern European nations. The lowest levels of offending are exhibited by immigrants from Southeast Asia.[34] Given the date of the study, this ranking seems to match up well with the hypothesis that war in immigrants' native countries translates into crime in the host country, but it is far from conclusive. Martens calls for more investigation into

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[31] Vazsonyi and Killias 2001, p. 332.
[32] Pater Martens, "Immigrants, Crime and Criminal Justice in Sweden," Crime and Justice, Vol. 21, Ethnicity, Crime and Immigration: Comparative and Cross-National Perspectives, University of Chicago Press, 1997, p. 185.
[33] Martens 1997, p. 241.
[34] Martens 1997, p. 242.

why so much variance in criminal activity is seen between immigrants with different countries of origin.

In a different vein, Martens reports a surprising finding: that first generation immigrants in Sweden are more likely to commit crimes than second generation immigrants (see Appendix A). Such a finding runs counter to nearly every other empirical study on immigrants and crime in Europe. It does, however, provide strong support for Sweden's efforts to integrate immigrants, and is evidence of the success of its welfare state and the unparalleled array of services offered to immigrants and their children (including language training, child care, housing, medical care, and free education). Martens is cautious about making that conclusion, however tempting, and notes that the definition of "second generation immigrant" used in his data is different from that of many other studies, in that it includes children of mixed parentage (where one parent may be a native Swede). For this and other reasons, Martens concludes that more research into this topic must be done; but it remains a tantalizing possibility.[35]

In any event, it seems clear that the changing nature of immigration, and the increasing numbers of immigrants fleeing hostile or devastated homelands, has had an effect on immigrant criminality in their host nations. Whether that factor can totally account for increases in violent crime and homicide across Europe is less clear, and can only be resolved by future research.

Conclusion

At present, it is impossible to know exactly how much of Europe's modern upswing in violent crime and homicide is attributable (directly or indirectly) to the massive increase in immigration over the same time period. But there are clear indications that immigration plays a role in at least some of that increase. While a long tradition of social science research is persuasive that immigrants are not more likely to commit crimes than their native born

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[35] Martens 1997, p. 245.

counterparts, increased immigration can lead to increased crime in other ways. New incarnations of organized crime, in the form of criminal networks, tend to utilize and victimize a disproportionate amount of immigrants (especially non-EU immigrants). The failure of host societies to integrate immigrants, and especially the children of immigrants, may lead to increased crime in the second generation. And the changing nature of immigration – including a shift from "foreign labor" to asylum-seekers – may also drive up crime, if immigrants from troubled countries bring those troubles with them to their host countries.

If increased immigration in Europe, then, does indeed have a role in Europe's modern upswing in violent crime and homicide, what are the implications for social theories of crime? Might we fit this finding with Elias's civilizing process?

As I mentioned earlier, the recent increase in homicide and violent crime in Europe, starting around the 1950s, presents a challenge to proponents of the theory that interpersonal violence in societies decreases as state formation processes run their course. The centralized state achieves a monopoly of legitimate violence, and the factions and individuals within the state more or less accept that power arrangement. Once this monopoly stabilizes and takes hold, and as individuals become more interdependent and connected, they also begin to act with greater degrees of internalized self-restraint. This self-restraint is evidenced by things like the refinement manners, etiquette, speech, and courtesy towards others. One of the results of this "civilizing process" is a gradual but constant decrease in violent crime and homicide. Why, then, would the stable democracies of Europe, with long-standing traditions of centralized power and monopolies of force, show an increase in interpersonal violence and crime during the latter half of the twentieth century?

The answer to this dilemma may be the increased immigration experienced by Europe during the same period. Immigrants may act as "centrifugal forces" (to borrow a term from Spierenburg) within nations, counterbalancing the long-standing centralized arrangement. The hypotheses discussed in this paper clearly provide evidence that this would occur. Criminal networks operating in Europe are obvious destabilizing influences, and pose a direct threat to the power monopoly of the state. Furthermore, the failure of many states to integrate the second generation of immigrants has resulted in a new "underclass" in Europe, one which, as we have seen, has every reason *not* to see the state's centralized monopoly as legitimate. In fact, this generation, and subsequent generations, may define themselves in opposition to the state. Finally, immigrants arriving from nations with drastically different conditions (like war, famine, or conflict) than their host nations may not have developed the kind of self-restraint necessary to avoid violence and crime. In fact, the very traits considered illegitimate or criminal in Europe (like aggressiveness, outward displays of violence, etc.) may actually be instrumental means of *avoiding* violence in the immigrants' countries of origin.

Thus, immigration in Europe acts in opposition to the civilizing processes that would ordinarily work to reduce interpersonal violence and homicide. Seen in this way, the recent upswing in European violent crime and homicide is not a challenge to Elias's theory – Elias's theory actually *predicts* it!

There exists another dimension to this issue; another possibility that cannot be fully dealt with here, but one that is worth mentioning. Adam Crawford calls our attention to the influence of globalization, and its radical impact on Europe. Indeed, it is impossible that Europe will escape the influence of changes driven by commerce, technology, and the push for European integration. Crawford observes that this "international flow of business, trade, and information,"

(and, I would add, people – *immigrants*) has the effect of tearing up "many traditional forms of place-based authority and social control…"[36]

> This has resulted in what some commentators have referred to as the 'hollowing out of the state' (Rhodes 1994): the erosion of the nation-state's capability to exercise political control. The modern state – the self-proclaimed monopolistic guardian of social order and crime control – is being restructured and its powers rearticulated both from above and below. (Crawford 2002)[37]

It would be absurd to think that this type of change, and this type of refiguration of the state, could take place without implications for the way individuals interact within those states. But as globalization decentralizes, it also brings an even greater interdependence. Will this interconnectivity of people be enough to maintain the civilizing process? Or will the changes in state formation processes, the decentralization of power, result in an "uncivilizing" process?

Perhaps no one knows the answers to those questions. But whether they are ready or not, the European nations must prepare to deal with their changing social, financial, and political landscape. Immigration is absolutely critical to their survival. Italy has a negative birth rate. Germany, for so long Europe's economic engine, is no better positioned. According to one recent report: "Even if the annual influx [of immigrants] were to double to 200,000, the population would still shrink by 8.5% by 2050."[38] If the nations of Europe wish to remain relevant in the future, they must reconsider, and then abandon, the "Fortress EU" mentality. Nationalistic platitudes articulated by aspiring politicians, though they may make inroads with the voters, are not a long-term solution to the problems facing Europe. Immigration will

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[36] Adam Crawford, "The governance of crime and insecurity in an anxious age: the trans-European and the local," *Crime and Insecurity: The Governance of Safety in Europe*, Adam Crawford, Ed., Willan Publishing: Portland, Oregon, 2002, p. 27.

[37] Crawford 2002, p. 27.

[38] Matthew Campbell, "Migrant Ghettos Anger Germany," *The Sunday Times*, 30 April 2006, retrieved from http://www.timesonline.co.uk/article/0,,2089-2157935,00.html on 6 May 2006.

continue and unless states adapt, tension, violent crime, and even homicide will likely continue

to increase.

Appendix A: (from Martens 1997)

Offending among First and Second Generation Immigrants and Native Swedes by Type of Offense, 1985–89

	First Generation	Second Generation	Native Swedes
N	308,581	315,423	2,920,700
Percent in population	8.9	8.7	82.4
Assault, aggravated assault (in percent):			
Against unknown women	19	14	67
Against acquainted women	19	11	70
Against unknown men	18	14	68
Against acquainted men	18	12	69
Rape, aggravated rape	38	15	47
Other sexual offenses	10	8	82
Unauthorized takings and thefts of motorcars	12	17	71
Thefts from a motorcar	10	16	74
Robbery, aggravated robbery	22	17	60
Theft, petty theft in shop or department store	24	12	64
Fraud	17	11	72
Offenses inflicting damage	6	7	87
Road Traffic Offenses Act	15	12	72
Driving under the influence of alcohol	16	11	74
Narcotics Drug Law	11	11	78
Murder, manslaughter	28	10	61
Offenses against liberty and peace	20	12	69
Burglary, aggravated burglary in apartment or house	14	16	70

SOURCE.—Ahlberg (1996), table 22.
NOTE.—Numbers are percentages calculated on the number of offenses within each type of offense.