

Researchers find link between Latino employment and black urban violence

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Louisiana State University sociology Professor Edward Shihadeh and Ph.D. candidate Raymond Barranco have published a study titled "Latino Employment and Black Violence: The Unintended Consequence of U.S. Immigration Policy," in the March 2010 issue of *Social Forces*, the field's preeminent journal.

The study confirms that Latino immigration and dominance of low skill jobs have displaced blacks from low-skill labor markets, which in turn led to more violence in urban black communities. According to their analysis, this is traceable to U.S. immigration policies over the last several decades.

Before the [United States](#)/Mexico border was militarized, Latino immigration was a two-way trip; immigrants, mainly from Central America, moved to the United States temporarily to finance a project in their home country. But in response to U.S. public pressure, border security was intensified. Tall fences were built, cameras installed and the border was patrolled relentlessly by well-armed guards. As a result, Latino immigrants in the United States stopped returning home for fear that they could not repeat the trip. This increased the number of Latino workers in the United States competing for jobs in agriculture, manufacturing and construction. Blacks lost that competition in many cities, and where that occurred, murder rates went up.

"This is an unintended but significant result of immigration policies," said Shihadeh, lead author on the project. "This is not a blame game. We

do not advocate restricting the flow of Latino migrants in either direction. This is what triggered the flow of events in the first place. There is no reason to deprive this country of the rich contributions made by Latinos. Our study simply describes how immigration policy opened a new chapter in the history of the U.S. labor market and how that harmed black communities."

Sociological theory has linked black urban decline to poverty, the loss of manufacturing jobs and [racial segregation](#). This study introduces another factor in the dense cluster of black disadvantage - [immigration policy](#), which inadvertently flooded low skill markets with Latino labor, displaced blacks and, as a result, raised the rates of black murder.

"Blacks and Latinos both feel singled out and put upon. But few will address these issues because they're politically explosive," said Shihadeh. "The public mood makes this subject a live wire." Nonetheless, both researchers hope their work will fuel important discussions.

Provided by Louisiana State University

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