

How often are unauthorized immigrant workers trafficked and abused?

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Labor trafficking – or recruiting a person for labor through force, fraud, or coercion for involuntary servitude, debt bondage, or even slavery – has been a difficult problem to track among undocumented migrant workers. With unique access to a "hidden population" from one of America's largest Spanish-speaking immigrant destinations, a recent study finds that more than 30% of undocumented migrant laborers in this area are victims of labor trafficking and 55% are victims of other labor abuses.

In this study, published in the May issue of *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, researchers Sheldon X. Zhang, Michael W. Spiller, Brian Karl Finch and Yang Qin used recent advances in sampling methodology to survey 826 migrant workers in San Diego County. The researchers found that trafficking violations and labor abuse were more commonly inflicted by employers in the work place than by smugglers during transportation and that janitorial and construction workers reported the most violations and abuse.

"One shouldn't be surprised by the findings from the study. While we are all striving for a better life, we as a society should become more conscientious about improving the working conditions of those whom we have come to depend on for our living standard," commented the study authors.

The researchers also found that illegal status is likely the most significant factor contributing to vulnerability to trafficking violations.

"Labor [trafficking](#) and other forms of gross exploitation are happening in the U.S. and always to those who have the least," the researchers concluded. "The challenge is to figure out what to do about them."

More information: Find out more by reading the full article "Conflict and Agency among Sex Workers and Pimps: A Closer Look at Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking," available free for a limited time here:

ann.sagepub.com/content/653/1/65.full.pdf+html

This new study is part of a special issue from The ANNALS titled "Human Trafficking: Recent Empirical Research," edited by Ronald Weitzer and Sheldon X. Zhang.

Provided by SAGE Publications

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