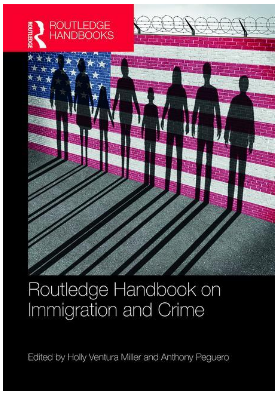

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An Assessment of Afro-Caribbean Immigrant Groups and Crime

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AN ASSESSMENT OF AFRO-CARIBBEAN IMMIGRANT GROUPS AND CRIME

Amie L. Nielsen

Introduction

Despite anti-immigrant public sentiment and political rhetoric (Martínez & Lee, 2000b; Portes & Rumbaut, 2014; Tanton & Lutton, 1993), there is now a good sense of the actual, empirical relationship between immigration and crime. This is relatively new, as at the turn of the 21st century, there was little contemporary research on the most recent wave of immigration and crime (Martínez & Lee, 2000b). Since then, however, this area of inquiry has increased dramatically (Kubrin, Hipp, & Kim, 2016). In general, micro- or individual-level studies show that immigrants are under-involved in crime relative to the native born but that the second and subsequent generations are more crime-involved than immigrants (Morenoff & Astor, 2006; Rumbaut & Ewing, 2007; Sampson, Morenoff, & Raudenbush, 2005). At the neighborhood (e.g., Kubrin & Ishizawa, 2012; Lee, Martínez & Rosenfeld, 2001; MacDonald, Hipp, & Gill, 2013; Nielsen, Lee, & Martínez, 2005) and MSA/city level (e.g., Butcher & Piehl, 1998; Reid, Weiss, Adelman, & Jaret, 2005), most macro studies show that higher concentrations of immigrants are either not related to, or are associated with, reductions in crime and violence rates, especially in traditional immigrant destinations (e.g., Ramey, 2013). Moreover, increases in immigration are associated with drops in national crime and violence rates over time (e.g., Ousey & Kubrin, 2009; Sampson, 2008).

With these basic findings understood by scholars, there have been increased calls for better specifying the nature of the immigration and crime relationship. Many note that monolithic categories such as "Latino" and "Asian" obscure important differences across groups, and they cite the need for more refined measures of immigrant groups and/or race and ethnicity (Kubrin et al., 2016; Peterson & Krivo, 2005; Sampson, 2013), including the need to examine differences by country of origin (e.g., DiPietro & Bursik, 2012; Mears, 2001; Nielsen & Martínez, 2006; Peterson & Krivo, 2005; Stowell & Martínez, 2007). Immigrant groups from different countries vary in their reasons for immigrating, levels of social capital, contexts of reception, and modes of incorporation, all of which have important potential implications for their wellbeing and crime involvement (e.g., Kalmijn, 1996; Portes & Rumbaut, 2014; Tonry, 1997).

Notable in the growth of research on immigration and crime linkages and the call for more nuanced assessments is the almost complete lack of attention paid to black immigrants in America.[1] Most of the focus is on Latinos and crime, which is not surprising given their more sizeable numbers. However, the black immigrant population is growing, and blacks are not a monolithic group (Capps, McCabe, & Fix, 2012; Kent, 2007; Logan & Deane, 2003; Tonry, 1997). Black immigrants, who arrive from countries in the Caribbean and Africa, face not only the usual difficulties that immigrants from elsewhere do, but they also encounter racial discrimination akin to that faced by African Americans. This is often not something that they encountered in their countries of origin to the same extent or fashion, further adding to difficulties faced in the U.S. (Rogers, 2006; Waters, 1999). In addition, some of these newcomers speak English in their countries of origin, but others face language barriers like many other immigrants (Nielsen & Martínez, 2006; Portes & Rumbaut, 2014). Black immigrants from the Caribbean, or Afro-Caribbean immigrants,[2] offer an important opportunity to better understand the roles of race and immigration (Kalmijn, 1996; Rogers, 2006) and how they are linked to crime (Nielsen & Martínez, 2006). As Rogers (2006, p. 46) notes:

> Afro Caribbeans share a common racial classification with African Americans as blacks yet also lay claim to a distinctive ethnic background as voluntary immigrants. They thus furnish a rare, natural case study for exploring the relative importance of race, ethnicity and immigrant status in American life.

Indeed, Afro-Caribbean immigrants themselves, and in comparison with African Americans, are the focus of work on racial politics and ethnic identity (e.g., Kasinitz, 1992; Rogers, 2006; Waters, 1999), labor market outcomes (e.g., Ifatunji, 2016; Kalmijn, 1996), immigrant incorporation (e.g., Portes, Fernández-Kelly, & Haller, 2009; Portes & Rumbaut, 2014; Waters, 1999), substance use (e.g., Broman, Neighbors, Delva, Torres, & Jackson, 2008), and other areas.

Explicit calls for more attention to be paid to the relationships between Afro-Caribbean immigrants and crime (Nielsen & Martínez, 2006) have been largely unheeded. In this chapter, I assess the limited literature on Afro-Caribbean immigrants and crime. I first provide a general overview of who these immigrants are and some of their characteristics related to reasons for immigrating, human capital, and context of reception. I then discuss the limited extant literature concerning these groups and crime.

Afro-Caribbean Immigrant Groups

In general, the term Afro-Caribbean immigrants refers to people who migrate from countries located in the Caribbean. Many of these nations have populations with African ancestors, and their populations tend to be racially black. They were occupied by European countries, and the main language spoken (English, Dutch, French or French Creole, and Spanish) typically reflects this (Rogers, 2006; Waters, 1999). The Caribbean is comprised of thousands of islands and 13 independent countries (and several territories of other countries). The nations include the English-speaking countries of: Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, Bermuda, Grenada, Jamaica, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, and Trinidad and Tobago; the French and French Creole speaking nation of Haiti; and the Spanish-speaking Dominican Republic and Cuba (www.worldatlas.com/webimage/countrys/carib.htm; accessed 4/21/17; Kalmijn, 1996).

However, specifying which countries actually should be included under the umbrella of "Afro-Caribbean" is no small task (Waters, 1999). Some scholars focus on people from nations in this region that only speak English and often refer to them as West Indian (e.g., Model, 2008; Rogers, 2006; Waters, 1999).[3] Yet, this results in Haitians, whose primary language in Haiti is French Creole or French, being excluded from consideration despite their relatively large representation in the U.S. This also results in the exclusion of Spanish-speaking nations which otherwise might be included, such as Cubans, Puerto Ricans, and Dominicans.[4] Some include countries that actually are part of the mainland of Latin America rather than just the island nations (Henke, 2001; Kent, 2007). For the purposes of this chapter, I include (or attempt to include) immigrants from all of these countries[5] except Cubans and Puerto Ricans, because they are considered key Latino groups. However, I include immigrants from the Dominican Republic because substantial numbers self-identify as black and are perceived and treated as black by Americans (Kent, 2007) although some focus on language and treat them as Latino (e.g., DiPietro & Bursik, 2012; Solis, Portillos, & Brunson, 2009).

While Latino immigrants comprise the majority of the immigrant population (Pew Research Center, 2017; Portes & Rumbaut, 2014), the Afro-Caribbean population is substantial. In 2015, there were approximately 3,167,000 immigrants from Afro-Caribbean countries in the U.S., representing 7.2% of immigrants. Of Afro-Caribbean immigrants, Dominicans (over 1 million), Jamaicans (over 700,000), Haitians (670,000), and persons from Trinidad and Tobago (232,000) comprise the largest groups (Pew Research Center, 2017).[6] The size of the black Caribbean immigrant population grew at a greater rate than immigrants overall from 1980 to 1990, at about the same rate as other groups from 1990 to 2000, while growth was somewhat slower from 2000 to 2009 (Capps et al., 2012).

While these reflect contemporary numbers, Afro-Caribbean immigration to the U.S. occurred as early as the 1880s (Portes & Rumbaut, 2014), with Jamaicans in particular represented in fairly sizeable numbers (Kent, 2007). As with other groups, immigration largely stopped in the 1920s. It resumed with the 1965 Immigration and Nationality (Hart Celler) Act (Kent, 2007; Portes & Rumbaut, 2014; Waters, 1999). Of particular importance for Afro-Caribbean immigration in the Act were provisions for family reunification and occupational preferences and the elimination of national quotas (Kent, 2007; Waters, 1999). The Refugee Act of 1980 also allowed for a small percentage of Haitians to enter the U.S. (Kent, 2007).

The motivations for immigrating, human capital, and contexts of reception are all important for immigrant incorporation and wellbeing (Portes & Rumbaut, 2014; Stowell & Martínez, 2009), including crime involvement. As of 2005, of Afro-Caribbean immigrants who entered the U.S. legally, about one-third entered through family sponsored preferences, and another 52% entered via family reunification policies. About 4% entered via occupational preferences, and a small percentage (3%)—almost exclusively Haitians—entered as asylees or refugees, while the rest arrived through other mechanisms (Kent, 2007).

There are differences across Afro-Caribbean groups in terms of migration motivation, however. For example, although Haitians overall are often considered to officially be "economic migrants," the same as Jamaicans, Haitians really are often more motivated by political turmoil in the country (Kalmijn, 1996; Stepick, 1998). Portes and Rumbaut (2014) show that in 2010, less than 1% of Haitian immigrants entered via employment preferences, but almost 85% came via family preferences/relative of U.S. citizen, and over 12% via refugee policies. For Dominicans, the same percentages were less than 1, 99, and less than 1. Immigrants from the Dominican Republic also have varying reasons for immigrating, including economic, political, and familial (DiPietro & Bursik, 2012).

Afro-Caribbean immigrants come to the U.S. with varying levels of human capital, which may have implications for crime. Based on 2010 data, Portes and Rumbaut (2014) show that Jamaicans are "near U.S. average" in educational attainment while Haitians and Dominicans are below it. Labor force participation followed a similar pattern, with both Haitian and Dominican immigrants falling substantially below the U.S. averages for percentage employed in professional specialty occupations, and they were both higher than the average for percentage unemployed. (No comparable national data were provided for Jamaicans or other Afro-Caribbean immigrants.) For self-employed per employment rate (entrepreneurship), immigrants from Trinidad and Tobago, Dominican Republic, Jamaica, Guyana, and Haiti all fell below the U.S. national average. Jamaican immigrants were in the "close to U.S. average" median household income range while Haitians and Dominicans were below it. Jamaican poverty rates were slightly below the U.S. average, while Haitians and Dominicans were substantially above it (Portes & Rumbaut, 2014). Based on data from the Children of Immigrants Longitudinal Study (CILS), Portes et al. (2009) report Haitians in particular were not well off relative to other immigrant groups in terms of education, occupational attainment, family stability, and income; Jamaicans were better on all measures except stable families.

Non-English-speaking immigrants face a myriad of difficulties, and these impact some Haitians and Dominicans among the Afro-Caribbean groups. Only a very small percentage (0.2%) of the U.S. population speaks Haitian Creole, putting Haitian immigrants in a difficult situation. Moreover, 25.5% of Haitian immigrants and 45.5% of Dominicans report that they speak English "not well" or "not at all," although this varies by age of immigration (Portes & Rumbaut, 2014).

Upon arrival, the majority of Afro-Caribbean immigrants are geographically concentrated, and they tend to move to three locales: the New York City area (especially Jamaicans), Miami (especially Haitians), and Fort Lauderdale (especially Jamaicans) (Kent, 2007; Logan & Deane, 2003). None of the other top 15 destinations garners more than 4% of Afro-Caribbean/black Latin American immigrants (Kent, 2007). That they are concentrated in a few areas helps with incorporation as they typically move to areas with established co-ethnics. However, immigrants have always encountered negative sentiment from U.S. natives, and this is especially true for Haitians (Martínez & Lee, 2000b; Portes & Rumbaut, 2014). Haitians were stereotyped as drug users, AIDS prone, and criminal, among other labels (Nielsen & Martínez, 2006). Haitians encountered a hostile U.S. government who largely treated them as "illegal" aliens as well as a mostly hostile citizenry due to both race and immigrant status (Dunn, 1997; Martínez, Lee, & Nielsen, 2004; Portes & Stepick, 1993; Stepick, 1998).

Given the diversity across Afro-Caribbean groups, it should be expected that there will be potentially large differences in crime involvement across groups and relative to the native born (Americans). These topics are addressed next.

Afro-Caribbean Immigrants and Crime

In this section, I discuss the limited literature that examines relationships between Afro-Caribbean immigrants and crime. I include studies that examine aggregate groups such as "Caribbean" and "West Indian" immigrants. To the extent possible, I highlight studies that distinguish among Afro-Caribbean groups[7] and/or that compare them to other immigrants or the native born. I first address micro- or individual-level research, including generational differences, then consider neighborhood-level studies followed by research on national arrest and incarceration rates. I then briefly address gangs and intimate partner violence.

Individual-Level Studies

A number of individual-level studies have examined the relationship between Afro-Caribbean immigrants and crime, including especially generational differences. Some examine self-reported crime/delinquency involvement, while others examine differences in likelihood of victimization or offending using police or medical examiner data.

In one study, Dinovitzer, Hagan, and Levi (2009) examined "youthful illegalities" among 8th to 12th graders using two cross-sectional surveys collected in similar ways in Toronto[8] in 1976 and 1999. The illegalities measures included drug use and typical forms of delinquency (e.g., property offenses, beaten someone up). The authors sought to better understand processes that distinguish crime involvement for immigrants from native-born youths. Several immigrant-origin groups were identified, including one for youths originating from African/Caribbean Basin.[9] Net of immigration status (first or second generation) and controls, all of the groups they examined, including the African/Caribbean Basin one, were less involved in youthful illegalities than Anglo origin and non-Anglo European origin youth. Dinovitzer et al. (2009) further showed that differences across the groups were eliminated once school commitment in particular as well as risk aversion were controlled, indicating that the higher levels of these factors among such groups as African/Caribbean Basin youth than the Anglo and other European origin youths accounted for their differences in crime involvement.

Martínez, Lee, and Nielsen (2001) examined homicide victim data for the city of Miami for the years 1980 through 1990. They assessed whether Mariel Cubans were particularly likely to be victims of homicides, especially involving strangers, relative to other racial/ethnic and largely immigrant groups in Miami. One such group included persons of "Afro-Caribbean" origin (not further distinguished based on immigrant status). Homicide was disaggregated based on the victim and offender relationship: stranger, acquaintance, intimate, and family. Multivariate results showed that Afro-Caribbeans (and African Americans and non-Mariel Latinos) were more likely than Mariel Cubans to be killed by strangers than by acquaintances.

Other studies provide more specific information concerning country of origin. Nielsen and Martínez (2011) examined arrestee data for robberies and aggravated assaults from the city of Miami for 2000 through 2004. The arrestee information included data concerning arrestees' race, ethnicity, immigrant status, and, for immigrants, country of origin. The outcome was the likelihood of being arrested for aggravated assault versus robbery, with the latter deemed more serious and predatory. Bivariate results showed that immigrants overall were less likely than the native born to be arrested for robbery than aggravated assault. The multivariate analyses controlled for a host of other factors and indicated that U.S. born Haitians did not differ from African Americans in the likelihood of arrest for robbery rather than aggravated assault. Of specific immigrant groups, both Haitian and Dominican immigrants (along with Cuban, Honduran, Nicaraguan, and other immigrants) were less likely than native-born persons to be arrested for robbery. None of the immigrant groups differed from one another on the outcome.

There are differences by generational status in crime involvement, with second (native-born Americans) and subsequent generations more likely than the first generation (immigrants) to be involved in crime (Morenoff & Astor, 2006; Rumbaut & Ewing, 2007; Sampson et al., 2005). This work typically uses either incarceration rates or self-reported crime. Some research in this area has examined aggregate Afro-Caribbean groups.

Hagan, Levi, and Dinovitzer (2008), in a study of youths in two cohorts in Toronto, reported findings for immigrant and second-generation youths relative to youths with Anglo fathers. They considered youths' geographic origins, including a combined group with African and Caribbean backgrounds. Immigrants were less involved in crime than the native born, and the second generation for each group was more crime-involved than immigrants, including for the African/Caribbean Basin youths. However, Hagan et al. (2008) note that their study, as well as others that examine similar issues, shows that second-generation youth did not have higher crime involvement than native youth. Bersani (2014) sought to determine whether first- and second-generation immigrants have different offending trajectories over time. Using data from the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1997, she showed that immigrants are less crime-involved than the second generation or native born. The latter two groups, however, had generally similar offending trajectories. No differences were found in the likelihood of being in a particular trajectory for either first or second generation by nationality; a measure for Caribbean origin was used (this included Cubans and Puerto Ricans, as well as groups of interest here). Although she does not elaborate in detail, Waters (1999) indicates that some second-generation West Indian youths in her study, particularly those who self-identified as "American," may become involved in the underground drug economy and other criminal activities.

Some of the research on generational differences in crime involvement has focused on the potential role of "acculturation" or "assimilation" into U.S. society as possible explanations (Rumbaut & Ewing, 2007). A related theoretical approach has also been developed to explain this phenomenon, and it has been discussed with Afro-Caribbean immigrants as particularly likely to be affected.

Specifically, Portes et al. (2009), Portes and Rumbaut (2014), and Portes and Zhou (1993) theorize about segmented assimilation. They suggest that due to major structural changes in American society over the last several decades, including deindustrialization, economic restructuring, and greater emphasis on educational credentials, there are decreased likelihoods that immigrants, and particularly the second generation, will experience upward mobility. Instead, for many groups, downward mobility will be experienced, and this is especially likely to be the case for second-generation Afro-Caribbean youth. Indeed, Portes and Zhou (1993) highlighted Haitian youths in particular as at risk of downward mobility. In part due to economic factors and racial discrimination, they often move into impoverished inner city African American neighborhoods. As the children grow up, they are put into a position of exposure to the urban "underclass" as they become acculturated and Americanized. This may lead to greater involvement with drugs, gangs, crime, and deleterious economic outcomes. Portes et al. contend that if the youths maintain strong ties with their families and their origins, they have a greater chance of assimilating into middle-class society (Portes et al., 2009; Portes & Rumbaut, 2014; Portes & Zhou, 1993; see also Waters, 1999).

Results for specific Afro-Caribbean groups show patterns indicative of downward mobility. Dominicans are one group for whom this pattern of higher crime involvement among the second generation (aged 18 to 39) holds (Rumbaut & Ewing, 2007; Rumbaut, Gonzales, Komaie, Morgan, & Tafoya-Estrada, 2006; but see DiPietro & Bursik, 2012). Using data from the CILS, Portes et al. (2009) show the percentages of second-generation youths at approximately age 24 who were incarcerated. For Haitian immigrants, 14.3% of males were incarcerated and 20% of Jamaican/West Indian males were incarcerated. They note that these percentages are below incarceration rates of African American males between ages 18 and 40, but suggest that with additional time it is likely the Jamaican/West Indian group would reach that level. The multivariate analyses included whether incarcerated as one of several items in the outcome, but the results also suggested that second-generation Haitian and Jamaican/West Indian youths were experiencing and were at greatest risk to experience downward assimilation, including in the area of crime (Portes et al. 2009; see also Portes & Rumbaut, 2014).

Macro-Level Studies

A number of macro-level studies examine the relationship between Afro-Caribbean immigrants and crime. These studies focus on Miami; some are largely descriptive while others involve multivariate analyses. Most of these studies are conducted by Martínez et al., and they are largely framed in terms of social disorganization (Shaw & McKay, 1942/1969) and immigrant revitalization (Lee, 2003; Lee et al., 2001) perspectives.

In a series of descriptive studies, Martínez and colleagues addressed levels of violence involvement and associated factors for Afro-Caribbean groups, especially in comparison to other groups. In one paper, Martínez and Lee (2000b) presented trends over time for homicide victimization in Miami for 1980 to 1995. For the period, Haitian homicide victimization rates were the lowest of any ethnic group in the city. Despite Miami's high overall homicide rates, Haitian rates were just above or below national rates for cities of the same size. In another paper, Martínez and Lee (1998) presented "the first post-World War II urban homicide study ever conducted on immigrant (Haitian, Latino) and native born (Anglo, African American) violence in the United States" (p. 292). (They do not explicitly distinguish between native-born and immigrant Haitians or Latinos, however.) They show that in Miami for 1985 to 1995, homicide victimization rates for Haitians (16.7 per 100,000) were lower than those of the other three groups examined: African Americans (66.3), Anglos (26.6), and Latinos (23.8). Haitians also comprised about 6% of the total homicide victims, but were an estimated 14% of the city's population. For Haitian and Anglo victims, the largest motive category was robbery, while for Latinos and African Americans it was escalation. Unlike for the latter two groups, Haitian (and Anglo) homicide also tended to be interethnic. Thus, Haitians had low homicide rates and the circumstances of said rates were somewhat different from other groups. As the authors note:

> [t]he two ethnic groups with larger proportions of immigrants, Haitians and Latinos, have lower homicide rates than the two groups with smaller proportions of immigrants, African Americans and Anglos. Latino, and especially, Haitian homicide rates are lower than might be expected given the relatively high levels of economic deprivation in these groups.
>
> *(p. 301)*

In another study, Martínez and Stowell (2012) focused on homicide victims in Miami and San Antonio. A small part of this paper involved descriptive statistics concerning the racial/ethnic/nativity composition of homicide victims in Miami from 1980 to 1989 based on Miami Police Department and Miami Dade Medical Examiner Reports. The included groups were non-Latino whites, non-Latino blacks, Latinos, Mariel Cubans, Haitians, and Jamaicans. Among the key group differences were that among homicide types, a disproportionate percentage (54.5% versus 17.5% overall) of Jamaican homicides involved drugs; Haitian drug homicides were slightly below the overall average. For both Haitian and especially Jamaicans, the groups' involvement in intimate homicides and escalation incidents were below the city average. However, while Jamaican victimization for robbery homicides was less than half the city average, Haitians were victimized at almost twice the city average for robbery offenses. Other distinctions across groups showed that for Jamaicans and Haitians, alcohol was less likely to be involved, Jamaican victims were almost exclusively male, and Jamaican victims were more likely than others to be killed with guns.

Martínez and Lee (2000a) examined homicides in Miami over the period of 1980 to 1990, a time that was marked by many changes in the city. These included the Mariel boatlift, massive immigration from Haiti, along with cocaine wars. The authors examined both homicide offending and victimization rates for Haitians, Jamaicans, and Mariel Cubans. They note that this is "one of the first contemporary studies of immigrant Afro-Caribbean (Haitians, Jamaicans, and Mariel Cubans) homicide in a major U.S. city" (p. 795). (They do not explicitly distinguish immigrant from native-born Haitians and Jamaicans.) Over the years of 1980 and 1990, 28% of homicide victims in Miami were Caribbean immigrants (including Mariels), while they were 15% of offenders. For 1980, total homicide offending rates were 67.9 per 100,000 in the city; Haitians (26.4) were low and Jamaicans (102.2) were high. In 1990, however, the total rate was 49.9 per 100,000, while it was 12.8 for Haitians and 15.9 for Jamaicans. In both years, Haitian victims tended to be equally likely to be killed by African Americans and other Haitians. In 1980, one-half of Jamaican victims were killed by African Americans, and one-third were killed by other Jamaicans. In 1990, fully two-thirds of Jamaicans were killed by African Americans and about one-quarter by Jamaicans. Guns were especially likely to be used in killings of Jamaicans and Haitians in both years. Robbery homicides and nonintimate-known people were important categories for Haitians in both years. For Jamaicans, felony and robbery were higher than in the city in both 1980 and 1990, while in the latter year nonintimates were lower. In both years for both groups, intimate homicides were lower than the city average. Haitian killings were concentrated in Little Haiti while Jamaican homicides were dispersed particularly in Liberty City and Little Haiti. Martínez and Lee (2000a) state that: "Afro-Caribbeans are usually at greater risk of victimization than engaging in predatory activities, and overall they are involved in violence less than the city of Miami population" (p. 809).

Lee and Martínez (2002) used mapping techniques and examined 12 census tracts in Miami comprising two largely black communities: Liberty City and Little Haiti. Liberty City is populated almost exclusively by African Americans, while Little Haiti has a large Haitian immigrant population along with Jamaican and African American residents. These scholars used homicide victim data from 1985 through 1995 and 1990 Census data. Results showed that Liberty City and Little Haiti both had high rates of black poverty while Little Haiti had high rates of immigration. Overall, African American homicide rates were about 4.5 times higher than the Haitian rate (176 vs. 39 per 100,000, respectively). The authors note that there is a clear pattern of a negative relationship between immigration and homicide in the tracts examined and argue that their findings are consistent with immigrant revitalization (Lee, 2003; Lee et al., 2001).

In another descriptive study, Nielsen and Martínez (2006) focused on aggravated assault and robbery victimization for Haitians in Miami. Using data from the Miami Police Department for 1996 and 1997 and Census data from 1990, they examined six primary neighborhoods of Haitian residence in terms of economic wellbeing and violence. The study was framed in terms of social disorganization (Shaw & McKay, 1942/1969), immigrant revitalization (Lee, 2003; Lee et al., 2001), and segmented assimilation theories (Portes & Rumbaut, 2014; Portes & Zhou, 1993), with some support found for each perspective, especially immigrant revitalization. In terms of economic characteristics, the enclave of Little Haiti had very high levels of poverty, high school dropouts, and percentage employed in low skill jobs, and was at least as disadvantaged as the other five neighborhoods. Haitians had lower total robbery and aggravated assault victimization rates than did non-Latino whites, African Americans, and Latinos. Across the six neighborhoods, Little Haiti, despite its very high levels of disadvantage, was in the middle range for both outcomes, with Haitian victimization rates highest in the two predominantly African American areas.

Other studies used multivariate approaches to further understanding of Afro-Caribbean immigrants and crime. For example, Martínez and Nielsen (2006) examined aggravated assault and robbery victimization rates per 1,000 population in Miami using crimes reported to the police in 1996 and 1997. Descriptive results showed that communities that were "heavily" (i.e., 40% or more of the population) African American, Latino, and Haitian had differing overall victimization rates. Heavily African American communities had the highest rates of victimization, Latino communities the lowest, and heavily Haitian neighborhoods were in between the other two groups. For group specific victimization, Haitians did not differ from Latinos; both groups experienced much lower victimization rates than did African Americans. The multivariate results showed that economic disadvantage was a positive and significant predictor of all group specific outcomes except African American robbery victimizations. Residential instability was significantly associated with Haitian aggravated assault victimization and African American and Latino robbery victimizations.

Stowell and Martínez (2007) examined violence in two cities—Miami and Houston—in order to better specify the relationships between immigration and crime at the neighborhood level. In both cities, they focused on the sizes of the four largest specific immigrant populations, rather than a monolithic measure of recent immigrants. For Miami, this included Cubans, Nicaraguans, Hondurans, and Haitians. The dependent variables (aggravated assault, robbery, and homicide) were obtained from the police departments in the two cities for the years 1999 and 2000. Multivariate analyses were conducted separately for each immigrant group. Independent variables based on the U.S. Census were poverty (economic disadvantage), a diversity measure for heterogeneity, residential instability, and controls. In Miami, the results for Haitians showed that, similar to the other groups for all three violence outcomes, percentage in poverty was positive and significant while neither diversity nor residential instability were significant. With regard to immigration, unlike for the other three groups—for whom the respective percentage in the population was negatively and significant related to violence—the percentage of Haitian immigrants was not significantly related to any of the three outcomes. The Houston findings were somewhat different from those for Miami, leading the authors to highlight the role of the social context of settlement for immigrants and crime.

Martínez et al. (2004) examined whether immigration and ethnicity are associated with drug violence in neighborhoods in Miami and San Diego. Neighborhoods were deemed to have drug violence if they experienced two or more drug-related homicides over the period 1985 to 1995.

The study was framed in terms of segmented assimilation theory. The argument was that more homicides might be expected in communities with immigrants that are not part of enclaves that offer social capital. They used 1990 Census data and data collected from the police departments of the two cities to examine whether a neighborhood was a "drug area." The independent variables include economic deprivation, residential instability, employment in low skill jobs, the percentage of the population that immigrated 1960 to 1969, 1970 to 1979, and 1980 to 1989, the percentage ethnic composition of several groups, and measures for ethnic enclaves in the two cities (including Little Haiti in Miami). The bivariate results showed that both Haitians and African Americans were likely to live in drug areas; the enclave measures were not significant. Multivariate analyses were conducted separately for the ethnic groups. The results showed that ethnic composition effects for the respective groups, including percentage Haitians, had no impact on whether groups (except African Americans) lived in a drug area, and the enclave measures were not significant. The immigration by decades measures were also generally not significant. Economic deprivation was positive and significant in all analyses, leading the authors (p. 152) to say that "social structure is more important than ethnic or immigrant composition."

Finally, Stowell and Martínez (2009) examined homicides in Miami for 1997 to 2003 based on data from the Miami Police Department. The study was framed in terms of social disorganization theory (Shaw & McKay, 1942/1969). Their separate measures of ethnicity/nativity included country of origin and immigration. The data from the 2000 Census also included measures of economic disadvantage, residential instability, percentage employed in professional jobs, ethnic heterogeneity, and control measures. The multivariate results indicate that the percentage Haitian was not associated with homicide, while the measures of Latino composition (e.g., percentage Cuban) were negative and significant.

National Incarceration and Arrest Issues

Hagan and Palloni (1999) assessed whether immigrants were particularly over-involved in crime at a time when the most recent wave of immigration and crime literature was just beginning to appear. They examined incarceration rates for several Latino immigrant groups along with Jamaican immigrants. Based on data from the 1991 Survey of State Prisons, they show that observed (unadjusted) ratios of immigrant to native-born incarceration rates ranged from 1.03 (El Salvador) to 4.8 (Cuba), with Jamaicans (2.3) in between. The authors then adjusted for the greater likelihoods of immigrants (versus the native born) of being male and 15 to 34 years as well as immigrants' greater likelihood of being detained, convicted, and sentenced to prison. Their adjusted results showed that the immigrant groups examined, including Jamaicans, had lower likelihoods of incarceration in state prisons compared to the native born. El Salvadorans (0.110) had the lowest ratio, Cubans (0.572) had the highest, while Jamaicans (0.305) and other groups were in between.

Rumbaut et al. (2006) examined national incarceration prevalence for various major immigrant groups in the U.S. Using data from PUMS for 18- to 39-year-old males in 2000, they contrasted 11 immigrant groups (and Puerto Ricans) with non-Hispanic whites and blacks. Overall, 3.04% of men in this age group were incarcerated. Dominicans overall were below this at 2.76%, although they had higher incarceration rates than every immigrant group considered except Cubans. In distinguishing by nativity, 0.86% of the foreign-born and 3.51% of non-immigrants were incarcerated. Of the immigrant groups, Dominicans (2.51%) were the highest (excluding Puerto Ricans). Among the U.S. born, the overall prevalence was 3.51%; Dominicans were slightly higher (3.71%) than the national average but they fared better than several other immigrant groups considered. As for the other groups examined, incarceration rates varied by educational attainment and length of time in the U.S. Dominican incarceration rates were higher than non-Latino whites but lower than non-Latino blacks.

Gangs and Drug Violence

Gang involvement and violence are two issues that are relevant for this chapter. Afro-Caribbean immigrants from Haiti, the Dominican Republic, and Jamaica were specifically mentioned as all highly crime and violence involved by Tanton and Lutton (1993) in their "discussion" of immigration and crime "problems" in the U.S. However, there is some level of truth with regard to Jamaican involvement. Jamaican posses, or gangs, were stereotyped to be, and were, among the prominent groups involved in crack cocaine markets and drug-related violence across many cities in the U.S. (Joseph, 1999; Williams & Roth, 2011). These posses were initially comprised primarily of undocumented Jamaican immigrants, but as they grew, they also came to include other Afro-Caribbean immigrants, including Trinidadians and Antiguans. By the 1990s, approximately 22,000 Jamaican posse members in 40 different posses distributed in most states in the U.S. were estimated to exist. (Of course, this represented a small proportion of Jamaicans in the U.S.) (Williams & Roth, 2011).

Some homicide victimization data supports the Jamaican involvement in drug crimes. McBride, Burgman-Habermehl, Alpert, and Chitwood (1986) examined homicides in Miami Dade County, Florida, for 1978 to 1982. This period was one in which Miami had the highest homicide rates in the country, and almost one-quarter of killings involved drugs. The authors report that Jamaicans were over-represented in drug homicides (6.2%) compared to homicides overall (4.2%). Haitians, on the other hand, were not (1.3% of drug homicides and 1.4% of total victims). As discussed in more detail earlier, Martínez and Stowell (2012) reported that for the city of Miami between 1980 and 1989, more than one-half (54.5%) of Jamaican homicide victims died as the result of drug-involved killings, while the average for other racial/ethnic/nativity groups was 17.5%. Moreover, the victims were more likely than most other groups to be young (18 to 24), they were almost exclusively male, and a larger percentage of Jamaican homicide victims were killed with guns than any other group. However, Martínez and Lee's (2000a) examination of homicides in 1980 compared to 1990 revealed stark changes among Jamaicans. For Miami overall, total offending rates per 100,000 in the city were 67.9 in total; Jamaicans were above average at 102.2. In 1990, the total rate was 49.9 per 100,000 while it was 15.9 for Jamaicans, well below the city average and rates in 1980. It should be noted that none of these studies (Martínez & Lee, 2000a; Martínez & Stowell, 2012; McBride et al., 1986) distinguished immigrants from the native born.

As Williams and Roth (2011) discussed, Jamaican posses were largely dismantled and destroyed through a series of means. These included the War on Drugs and "get tough" on crime policies, anti-gang policies and taskforces, changes in immigration policies in the 1990s, and widespread deportation, along with inter-gang competition. As a result of these factors, "the posses no longer present the high level of threat for which they were once well known and feared in the United States" and they have largely disappeared from discussion in the contemporary criminological literature (Williams & Roth, 2011, p. 310).

Intimate Partner Violence

Menjivar and Salcido (2002) discuss why immigrant women may be particularly vulnerable to experiencing IPV, although they note that their victimization rates tend not to be higher than those of the native born. However, there is little research concerning how this may apply to Afro-Caribbean immigrants. In one study, Lacey, West, Matusko, and Jackson (2016) examined the prevalence of IPV among black women, including both African Americans and women of Afro-Caribbean descent (although they did not distinguish based on immigrant status). They used data from the National Study of American Life (collected 2001–2003) to examine IPV among women from these two groups. The outcome was assessed by whether respondents had ever been "badly beaten up by a spouse or romantic partner." The bivariate results showed that African American women (17.9%) were significantly more likely than women of Caribbean origin to have experienced IPV (12.0%). Separate multivariate models for the two groups showed that there were both similarities and differences in predictors of IPV. The authors highlighted the need for more IPV research and the importance of considering cultural, social, and economic factors and to not treat blacks as a monolithic group.

Discussion and Conclusion

As black immigrants, the study of Afro-Caribbean newcomers offers an opportunity to simultaneously examine the roles of both race and immigration statuses, as well as the role of language for some groups, for crime. Scholars in other areas of sociology have identified these immigrants as an important group for yielding a host of insights about various sociological processes and mechanisms (e.g., Kalmijn, 1996; Rogers, 2006; Waters, 1999). Unfortunately, this opportunity has largely gone unfulfilled in criminology despite the multitude of calls to better understand the relationships involving race, ethnicity, immigration, and crime (Kubrin et al., 2016; Peterson & Krivo, 2005; Sampson, 2013), including examining country of origin for immigrants (Mears, 2001; Nielsen & Martínez, 2006; Peterson & Krivo, 2005; Stowell & Martínez, 2007).

Based on the limited literature available, a few conclusions can be drawn. First, Afro-Caribbean immigrant groups overall tend to be similar to other immigrants in that their crime involvement at the micro level tends to be lower than the native born (Bersani, 2014; Dinovitzer et al., 2009). However, like some other immigrant groups they seem to be experiencing downward assimilation, including greater involvement in crime among the second and subsequent generations (Hagan et al., 2008; Portes et al., 2009; Rumbaut & Ewing, 2007; Rumbaut et al., 2006; see also Martínez et al., 2004). As Hagan et al. (2008) highlight, however, despite this generational increase, the second and subsequent generations are typically no more likely than others in the native-born population to engage in crime. Portes et al. (2009) suggest that Haitian and Jamaican/West Indian immigrant groups are more likely than the others they examined to experience this downward assimilation in terms of crime and a host of other areas relevant to human capital. Afro-Caribbeans are less likely than other groups, especially African Americans, to be violence victims (Lee & Martínez, 2002; Martínez & Lee, 1998; Martínez & Nielsen, 2006; Nielsen & Martínez, 2006) or victims of IPV (Lacey et al., 2016). At the macro level, the presence of Afro-Caribbean immigrants is not related (Stowell & Martínez, 2007, 2009) or negatively related (Lee & Martínez, 2002) to violence, findings akin to other studies in the immigration literature (e.g., Kubrin & Ishizawa, 2012; Lee et al., 2001; MacDonald et al., 2013; Nielsen et al., 2005). National data suggest immigrant Dominicans are somewhat over-involved as arrestees (Rumbaut et al., 2006), but Afro-Caribbean immigrant groups (Jamaicans), similar to other immigrants, tend to be under-represented among incarcerated populations (Hagan & Palloni, 1999). There is some evidence that Jamaican posses were drug and violence involved in the 1980s and 1990s, but this seems to largely be in the past (Williams & Roth, 2011).

To the extent that data are available, there are some differences across Afro-Caribbean groups, as might be expected given group differences in human capital, context of reception, and reasons for immigrating. For example, Haitians had lower levels of homicide victimization, especially in 1980, than Jamaicans (Martínez & Lee, 2000a). Nonetheless, the results overall suggest that Afro-Caribbean immigrants are very much like other immigrants in their under-representation in crime. One of the key issues facing Afro-Caribbean immigrants is racial discrimination akin to what African Americans experience. In the case of crime, Afro-Caribbean immigrant groups tend to be more similar to other immigrant groups in that their crime involvement is low relative to the native born, often more so than might be expected given their human capital levels and levels of economic disadvantage in communities where many reside (Martínez & Lee, 1998; Nielsen & Martínez, 2006). As noted above, explicit comparisons reveal lower levels of crime involvement than for African Americans, the group for whom they are often mistaken.

Of particular note are the findings for Haitians. This group fares much worse than most immigrant groups on most measures of human capital. Although typically treated as economic immigrants by the U.S., they have endured decades of major political upheaval and violence in Haiti. They have been subject to very negative stereotypes on a variety of bases in the U.S. and the American government itself tends to be hostile to this very day (www.nytimes.com/2017/05/20/us/haitians-us-earthquake-immigration-protections.html?_r=0). They are black and subject to racism in America, they often settle in and around disadvantaged and high violence inner city neighborhoods, and they speak a language that is very rare in this country (Dunn, 1997; Portes & Rumbaut, 2014; Portes et al., 2009; Stepick, 1998). Yet, the Haitian immigrant violence rates are remarkable low despite these multiple disadvantages they face (e.g., Martínez et al., 2004; Martínez & Nielsen, 2006; Nielsen & Martínez, 2006).

Ultimately, however, there is a very limited extant literature on Afro-Caribbean immigrants and crime. Of studies that do consider black immigrants from the Caribbean, in some cases more than one group are lumped together because of small sample sizes (Bersani, 2014; Dinovitzer et al., 2009), making it difficult to assess if this is a blanket process for the groups. Given that the groups vary in terms of wellbeing, size in the U.S., language use, conditions in the country of origin, and in context of reception, this likely obscures some very important differences. Although this study attempted to assess this relationship for immigrants from 11 of these countries, the extant literature that disaggregates by group has almost exclusively focused on Dominicans, Haitians, and/or Jamaicans. While this makes sense given that these are three of largest Afro-Caribbean groups (Pew Research Center, 2017), there is almost no information for people from other countries in this region. In only a few cases are results for two or more black immigrant groups available to allow comparisons and thus more detailed understandings of Afro-Caribbean immigrant groups (Martínez & Lee, 2000a; Martínez & Stowell, 2012; Portes et al., 2009; Portes & Rumbaut, 2014). There are few macro-level studies that focus on Afro-Caribbean immigrants, and these are based only on Miami. While the Miami area is a major immigrant destination and is home to a very large Haitian population (Kent, 2007; Logan & Deane, 2003), there are other locales—NYC area in particular—that could be similarly examined.

Data issues are key to limiting our understanding of the relationship between Afro-Caribbean immigrants and crime. These fall in a few areas. First, only a handful of major surveys include substantial numbers of black immigrants from Caribbean countries to enable analyses. The few include such ones discussed above as CILS, the National Survey of American Life, and Hagan et al.'s Toronto study (although there are limited crime measures in the first two and the latter two only enable some disaggregation of the groups). Even the Add Health dataset, one of the major data sets used to study adolescent and young adult wellbeing, has about 91% native-born respondents out of the more than 20,000 total, and of their immigrant sample fewer than 100 are from Afro-Caribbean countries (www.cpc.unc.edu/projects/addhealth/documentation/ace/tool/variable?VariableId=911). Thus, when immigrant groups are examined at the micro level it is sometimes difficult to make distinctions across larger categories (e.g., Latino versus Afro-Caribbean), let alone by individual country of origin.

In macro-level research more refined measures of immigration than monolithic measures such as the percentage of recent immigrants are needed. For example, some scholars consider specific immigrant countries of origin composition (e.g., Stowell & Martínez, 2007, 2009). Kubrin et al. (2016) used data from several municipalities in California to illustrate different ways to try to better and more accurately measure immigration. They grouped immigrants once they arrived and relocated by area of origin (e.g., Caribbean), and by race/ethnicity of immigrants (e.g., black immigrants, Latino immigrants).

In addition, and very importantly, we lack racial, ethnic, and immigrant specific crime data. For example, Martínez and colleagues' studies were possible only because Martínez had access to the actual incident reports via police departments and medical examiners. While departments in cities with large immigrant populations are somewhat sensitive to these issues, through direct access, Martínez was able to double check each incident, and he created a language library to attempt to help identify people of Afro-Caribbean descent based on their surnames (e.g., Lee & Martínez, 2002). This is difficult, time-intensive work that also requires access to original crime data. Nonetheless, it yielded important insights, and scholars in the future should attempt to engage in similar efforts.

Ultimately, we need studies of Afro-Caribbean immigrants and crime in the U.S. As other social scientists are already aware, these groups offer a unique opportunity to better understand issues salient both to immigration status and race (e.g., Kasinitz, 1992; Rogers, 2006; Waters, 1999). Criminologists potentially have the opportunity to learn much by following their lead.

Notes

1 Crime involvement and related issues for Afro-Caribbean groups have received attention in Great Britain (e.g., Antonopoulos, 2003; Fitzgerald, 1997; Smith, 1997, 2005; Tonry, 1997).
2 Following Ifatunji (2016), I use the terms Afro-Caribbean immigrants and black immigrants from the Caribbean interchangeably.
3 Waters (1999) noted that while her emphasis was on immigrants and the second generation from English-speaking countries, she included Haitian youths in her study of the second generation so as not to further stigmatize them from their schoolmates.
4 Of course, Puerto Ricans are American citizens and are not technically immigrants. However, they are sometimes treated as immigrant groups in the literature (e.g., Rumbaut et al., 2006).
5 Although I attempt to include coverage of immigrants from all of these groups below, the reality is that there is very little research on the aggregate group of "Afro-Caribbean" immigrants. When attempting to focus on specific groups, the "bulk" of the research, such as it is, has examined Haitians, and to lesser extents, Jamaicans and Dominicans.
6 Not all immigrants from the countries under consideration are black, especially Dominicans, but I include them in these counts.
7 Some studies do not explicitly distinguish Afro-Caribbean immigrants from native U.S. born but I include them in this review.
8 Of course, Toronto is in Canada. However, the authors make the case that immigration processes are not very different in Canada and the U.S.
9 A note (5, p. 365) indicates that results were similar for African and Caribbean Basin origin youths but the groups were combined for power purposes.

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