

Settled immigrants in the city of Malaga: local host context and crime

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Abstract

Spain is one of the European countries where the immigrant population has grown the most during the first years of this century. However, crime rates have remained constant in this period, even have decreased slightly, so the evolution of both phenomena does not allow to establish a positive relationship between them. Nevertheless, empirical evidence has shown that the immigration experiences differ according to local host conditions. In this way, the context would facilitate the involvement of immigrants in criminal activities. Empirical studies that address the family and social circumstances of immigrants at the local level and from a criminological perspective have not been carried out in Spain. To fill this gap, 173 immigrants were interviewed between 2017 and 2018, in order to study the relationship between local host conditions and self-reported crime, victimisation, and the perception about social control. Findings indicate that a troubled neighbourhood explains the crime committed by immigrants and their victimisation, that committing crimes and being a victim is related, and that immigrants who have committed a crime or have been victim of crime do not have a good opinion about the police and criminal justice system.

Keywords: *Immigration, local context, integration, crime, legitimacy*

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1. Introduction

The identification of immigration with crime often flies over public opinion, and is sometimes present in political speeches and media headlines. The rapid growth of the foreign population often produces misperceptions caused by the difference. These perceptions lead to fears and unrest among the native population. That fear of the other is considered a social defence function (Rumbaut and Ewing, 2007).

The permanent idea that there is a positive relationship between immigration and crime has led to study in some countries if this relationship is true. At least there have been two ways to approach this. One of them has used macro data on crime and immigration, comparing their evolution (Alonso-Borrego et al, 2012; Awaworyi Churchill y Laryea, 2019). The other has focused on comparing different immigrant communities with similar socio-demographic characteristics but settled in a different host context. All of them conclude that there is no relationship between immigration and the growth of crime, and that the host context, rather than immigration, is what determines a high crime rate in certain urban areas (Lee, Martinez y Rodriguez, 2000; Martinez y Lee, 2004; Sampson, 2008).

Spain is one of the main recipient countries of immigrants in Europe, especially Africans and Latin Americans. The immigrant population in Spain began to grow at the beginning of the 21st century, peaking in 2011 (5.751.487 immigrants, 12,2% of the total population), and since then, the number has been progressively decreasing until today (in 2017: 4.572.807 immigrants, 9,8% of the total population). Maybe the effects of economic crisis can explain this situation, but this hypothesis does not concern us now. These data are illustrated in the Figure 1.

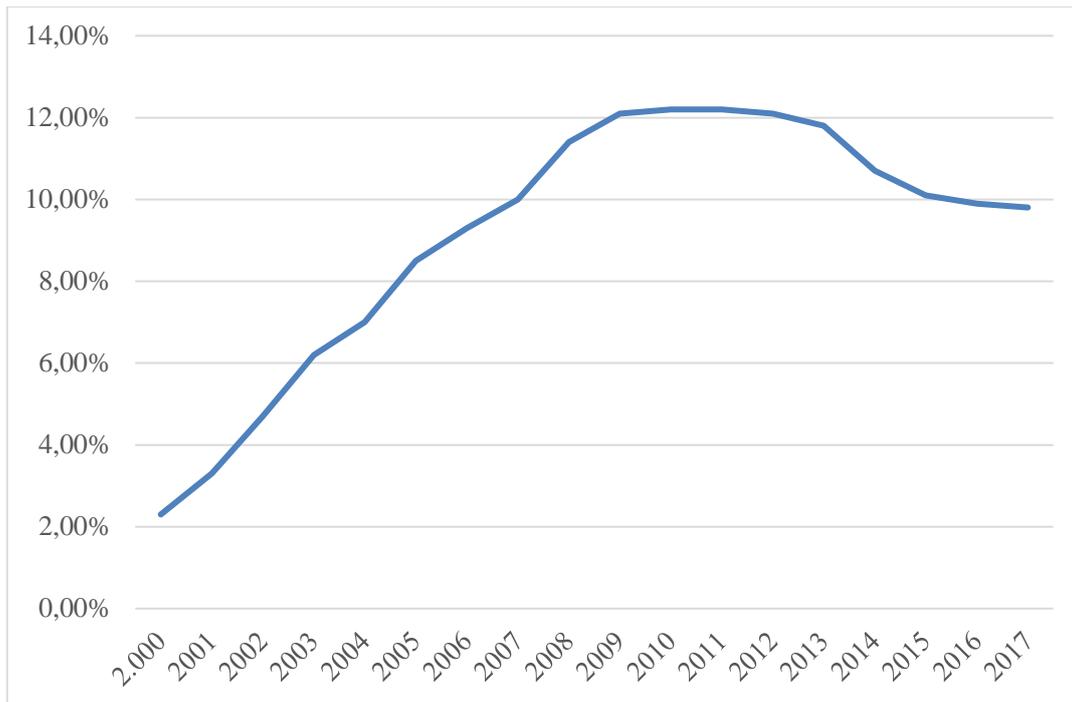
Malaga, which is the city where this research is focused, is located in the south of Spain, next to the Mediterranean Sea, specifically to its westernmost portion, called Alboran Sea. This is an important point of immigrant arrival, as we can often see in the media².

² Arroyo, J. (November 4, 2017). Los inmigrantes se lanzan al mar de Alborán. El País.

Retrieved from https://elpais.com/politica/2017/11/04/actualidad/1509824442_593834.html

Torres, F. (November 12, 2017). Más de 160 inmigrantes llegan al puerto tras ser rescatados en el Mar de Alborán. Diario Sur. Retrieved from <https://www.diariosur.es/malaga-capital/rescatan-inmigrantes-bordo-20171111165251-nt.html>

Figure 1. % of immigrant population in Spain



Source: own elaboration based on data from National Statistics Institute (INE, according to the initials in Spanish)

Observing Figure 2, we can see the evolution of the immigrant population in the city of Malaga (by continent of origin)³. It shows that the immigrant population began to grow at the beginning of the century, peaking between 2011 and 2013, and since then, the percentage of immigrants began to decrease (except Asians). Anyway, the percentage of immigrants has grown from 2004 (1,54% Americans, 1,3% Africans, 0,13% Asians) to 2018 (1,87% Americans, 2,33% Africans, 0,76% Asians).

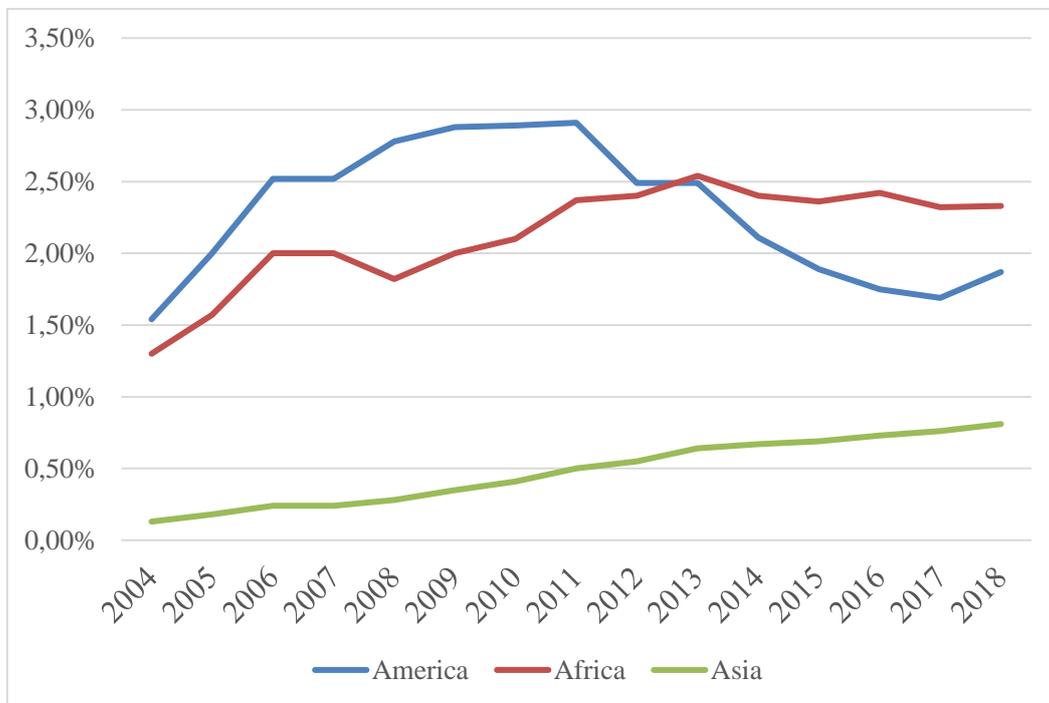
In general, we can affirm that the situation in Malaga is similar to the situation in Spain: the percentage of immigrants grew in the first years of the century and then that growth stopped.

At this point, it may be important to compare the evolution of immigrant population in Malaga with changes in crime rates in this same city, in order to respond, at least vaguely, if there is any relationship between the percentage of immigrants and crime.

³ Only those three continents are shown because they represent the concept of immigration better, and this fits the interest of this research

Unfortunately, crime data recorded in the city of Malaga are not particularly reliable, even not available for some periods. There is data available about the whole province of Malaga, but not about the city, which would be more accurate. However, according to the data from Ministerio del Interior, we can affirm, with due prudence, that the crime rate in Malaga has remained more or less constant in the last decade. Therefore, it does not seem that immigration is related to crime recorded in Malaga.

Figure 2. % of immigrant population in the city of Malaga (by continent of origin)



Source: own elaboration based on data from Malaga city council

After this brief contextualization, we can focus on the research itself. It is part of a project funded by Junta de Andalucía (SEJ 1489), called “Crime of immigrants settled in Spain”. Specifically, this research aims to study the factors that influence, not only the crime, but also the victimisation and the perceptions of immigrants settled in the city of Malaga. It is, therefore, a pioneering research in Spain, because empirical researches on the self-reported crime of immigrants in relation to their host contexts have not been conducted.



2. Theoretical framework

A study conducted in the US on Puerto Rican immigrants recently arrived in the country found that those living in New York City had high homicide rates, while Puerto Ricans living in other parts of the US had rates comparable to those of the white native population (Rosenwaiké y Hempstead, 1990). More recently, a study on El Paso Mexicans and Miami Cubans has been conducted. Despite the similarity of the structural characteristics of the two cities (for example, unemployment or poverty), Latinos in Miami committed three times more crimes than those in El Paso. The explanation provided by the authors is that the Cubans found accommodation in one of the most violent areas of the country (South Florida), unlike the Mexicans (Lee, Martínez y Rodríguez, 2000). Certainly the local host context can lead to a greater criminal participation of immigrant and native residents, but in many occasions, when comparing both groups, there is greater resistance to crime by immigrants than by natives (Martínez y Lee, 2004). So, the experiences of immigration vary enormously in function of the local conditions, and probably these conditions influence the criminal participation of the immigrants in greater measure than another type of elements to consider. That is why it is important to pay attention to the factors of the host context. As Tonry pointed out (1997), it is necessary to delve into the concurrent and absent factors among groups of immigrants and others settled in certain areas, to get to know those factors that positively influence the integration of the individual, and from that knowledge, develop preventive policies.

An approach to the migratory concept of reception in systemic terms allows to articulate its contours in an effective way (Canales Valenzuela, 2007). However, social contexts are composed of multiple elements sometimes difficult to specify. The absence or presence of certain factors or, even, the collective perception of some of its elements may determine that a context is of inclusion or exclusion. According to authors of different disciplines, the essential factors of an inclusive migratory context would be family relationships and social networks, the possibilities of access to employment, housing and its environment, the absence of discrimination and the legal stability that comes with the documentation to reside in the country (De Lucas, 2003; Maya Jariego, 2004; Carrera, 2006; Subirats, 2012). On the contrary, the exclusion factors are segregated neighborhoods or ghettos, poor conditions of habitability, ethnic segregation and poverty.

The great growth of migratory population in the last decades in Spain, that in a certain way has transformed our environment, has not been matched with adequate mechanisms for the management of that transformation. The immigration management model existing

in the European Union has been defined as instrumental and defensive, imposing conditions according to the interest of the host society. However, this management model does not respond to the existing reality. As De Lucas (2003) warns, it is easy to understand the distinction between immigrants in good and bad, necessary and rejectable, false or forced (refugees) versus real reasons of this model. This model of immigration management is basically police, assimilating the migration process to a series of obstacles to get the authorization to reside in the country. All this is also dressed with a xenophobic logic, according to De Lucas, since the person is treated not for what he does, but for the social group to which he belongs. However, the structural factor -the normative one- together with the biased institutional treatment, is the same throughout the national territory. For this reason, following De Lucas, the accommodation of immigration is dependent, not on that structural factor, but on the concrete characteristics of the local host contexts. However, from a legal perspective, different steps have been drawn. These are, on the one hand, administrative regularity, of state competence; and, on the other, the census, of local competence (Solanes, 2016). The latter reinforces the importance of the local sphere in the integration of immigrants beyond their administrative regularity.

Local contexts of accommodation for immigrants are based on opportunities for social integration (Maya Jariego, 2004). At the same, these depend to a large extent on the integration policies that are implemented. Spain is one of the countries of the European Union that does not have a state integration policy, since these powers are delegated in the autonomous communities.

The European integration model has been configured, according to experts in the field, as a unidirectional process in which the responsibility for integration rests with the immigrant (Carreras, 2006). The immigrant has to demonstrate that they know the language, the history and the political structure of the country. He has to adapt to our norms and customs. This is evident in the requirements of contracts or training courses, or exams of citizenship that have been put in place in Sweden, Denmark, Finland, the Netherlands, Austria, Belgium, France, United Kingdom, Estonia, Germany and Switzerland (Solanes, 2016).

For some experts the model of immigration management is police, and the integration model is based on legal and institutional control. From this view, we forget that the integration is a process of collective construction in which public authorities should be guarantors and not managers (Subirat, 2012; Solanes, 2016).

The disposition of the intergroup relations is decisive for the inclusion in a specific context. The analysis of social networks, therefore, allows determining the structural properties of a community, as well as its relations with the outside world. In the migration process, there are three key moments related to social inclusion: arrival, settlement or

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rooting and co-inclusion (Dasetto, 1990). In the first phase (arrival) family and / or social networks solve the difficulties of the new environment. However, in the settlement phase, these same networks can lead to segregation. The process of conglomerates is especially visible in immigration (Maya Jariego, 2004). Effectively, informal contacts (family, neighbourhood and so on) constitute the relational capital that provides competitive advantages for obtaining, for example, employment (Maya Jariego, 2004), housing and a neighbourhood environment with quality and warmth. Inclusion is also related to the creation of ties and the existence of contacts with certain people both in the group of belonging and other persons outside that group (Subirat, 2012).

The last element that is considered essential for an optimal reception context is the absence of discrimination and xenophobia. We must bear in mind that one of the most prominent social changes experienced in our country has been the increase in the foreign population. The immigrants constitute a new differentiated collective in our country. And in front of this new collective with different appearance and cultural differences, certain fears arise, leading to hostile attitudes. These fears, which arise above all from ignorance, contribute to the creation of negative social biases. Social biases have their origin in the fact that the human brain is incapable of establishing an infinite plurality of positions. That is why we categorize the environment, including the others in social groups, which conditions our knowledge of social reality (Montalbán and Durán, 1998). The division into social categories leads to ethnocentric biases: stereotypes are attributes that fall on the outgroup, which is considered different from the majority group, and can be defined as the set of shared beliefs about the personal characteristics and behaviors of a social group (Echebarría, 1995).

On the other hand, prejudices are negative attitudes towards the members of a group, which are based on an erroneous and rigid generalization. Discrimination is reached when prejudices become in action, that is, when they are transformed into a negative behavior, directed towards the person who is classified within a certain social. Many authors point to these cognitive biases as obstacles to the integration of immigrants. When some people are considered different from the community where they want to find accommodation, they can develop a defensive attitude of isolation.

If this hostile attitude comes from institutions such as the police or the judicial sphere, then, as the theory of procedural justice points out (Tyler, 2006), we are faced with citizens who do not feel respected, delegitimizing the authority of these institutions. Studies on police and courts consider that the legitimacy of the proceedings have to do with the quality of decision making (impartiality, equal treatment, and transparency) and interpersonal treatment (dignified and respectful treatment). Many studies have shown that quality in both aspects (decision making and interpersonal treatment) reinforces the social bonds between individuals and institutions, and as the feeling of belonging to the



group increases, trust increases. (Bradford and Jackson, 2010). That is, legitimacy is a subjective state of the governed, so they are who must recognize the authority of the system. As this legitimacy depends on interpersonal treatment and the decisions taken by the representatives of the institutions, legitimacy can vary from one local context to another. An institution is perceived as legitimate when it shares the belief that it acts competently, guarantees fair proceedings and provides equal protection to the whole society (Jackson, Hugh, Bradford, Pooler, Hohl and Kuha, 2012). The impartiality trial of the police is one of the most important factor in this type of process, since it has been proved that equity promotes a sense of inclusion and value within the group (Bradford, 2012). In fact, one of the most important consequences of this perception of legitimacy is citizen cooperation (Tyler and Huo, 2002), that responds, from a psychological perspective, to the degree of identity that citizens feel toward the institution, which is variable. It depends on the forms of police action (Tyler and Blader, 2003).

3. Objectives and hypothesis

In the light of the above, we propose an empirical approach to self-reported crime and victimisation of immigrants settled in Malaga, examining the protection and risk factors that exist in their host context, including the perception that they have about the police and the penal system.

The main objective of this research is to know the relations of the settled immigrant population with crime (authors or victims) and with the crime control system in the local host context. Specifically, we want to study:

1. The self-reported crime of immigrants settled in Malaga.
2. The victimisation suffered by immigrants settled in Malaga.
3. The characteristics of the host context (neighbourhood, social services, etc.).
4. The characteristics of the family and social networks of immigrants settled in Malaga (including administrative situation and others variables related to social roots).
5. The perception of settled immigrants about the police.
6. The perception of settled immigrants about criminal justice system.

This research raises the following questions:

1. What are the levels of crime and victimisation in relation to settled immigrants in Malaga?
2. What are the protection and risk factors that may explain the answer for the previous question?



3. What is the perception of settled immigrant population about the police and penal system (legitimacy)?

We establish the following hypothesis:

1. The level of crime committed by settled immigrants is not high.
2. The lack of social roots in the host context explains the crime committed by settled immigrants.
3. The settled immigrants think that the police do not act with objective criteria, but with racial biases.
4. The settled immigrants think that the criminal justice system does not act with objective criteria, but with racial biases.

5. Methodology

The idea was to survey immigrants settled in the city of Malaga. We understand by settled immigrants those foreigners over 18 years old coming from countries outside the European Union, who have lived in Malaga in a regular or an irregular situation for three years or more. With this definition we include a population that is in the process of being settled and that one in the inclusion phase. Therefore, from the life experience of each one of them, we will know the arrival phase that everyone went through.

In order to meet the objectives, we designed a questionnaire made up of 166 items. This questionnaire was divided into six main sections: sociodemographic data, housing and perceptions about the neighbourhood, job and livelihood, family and social relationships, crime and perception about penal system, and legitimacy and trust in the police.

Before surveying the final sample, it was necessary to conduct a pilot survey, in order to validate the questionnaire. Both for the pilot survey and for the final survey, the snowball sampling approach would be used, which consists of locating some "typical" individuals, according to the needs of the study, which lead to others and so on (Cea D'Ancona, M., 1996). As a complement to this sampling, since on several occasions the snowball was interrupted, the surveys were carried out in public places with a high concentration of immigrants or in social entities where they went to attend Spanish classes or other types of training.

The pilot survey was conducted between March and April 2017. The sample was 53 persons with characteristics required in the research. We tried, therefore, to represent sexes, different ages, nationalities and neighbourhoods.

The internal consistency of the whole questionnaire, measured with Cronbach's Alpha, is 0.65. A good consistency is understood from 0.70. The questionnaire, being close to that value, stays slightly below. An acceptable value given that Cronbach's Alpha is more

useful when the variables are scales. In fact, analysing Cronbach's Alpha by sections of the questionnaire shows a greater consistency in those sections whose questions have been designed using Likert-type scales (sections 2 and 4) and smaller, even with negative values, in those sections whose variables are nominal (sections 3 and 5).

Figure 3. Internal consistency by sections according to Cronbach's Alpha

Sections of the questionnaire	Cronbach's Alpha
1. Socio-demographic data	0,68
2. Housing and perceptions about the neighbourhood	0,89
3. Job and livelihood	-1,6
4. Family and social relationships	0,71
5. Crime and perception about penal system	0,24
6. Legitimacy and trust in the police	0,69

Source: own elaboration

For the validation of the sections with nominal variables we follow two strategies: on the one hand, we reviewed the wording of the questions based on the experience of the field workers, taking into account the difficulties related to understanding the questions, or the discomfort of the respondents when answering some questions. We also checked some basic relationships that can be expected after crossing variables.

From the first strategy, some changes were made to the questionnaire. Specifically, we improved the introduction and the objectives, since there were too generic terms, and there was no reference to the intention to inquire about the criminal participation of the respondents. Some immigrants were uncomfortable with some questions, saying that "it seems that immigrants are treated as criminals". To solve this, the new wording of the introduction specifies that questions of that kind will be asked. We also included responses categories not initially thought, grouped repetitive questions, modified the scale of some questions that had an inverse order and reformulated a couple of questions because their formulation was confusing and required additional explanation by the interviewers.

Regarding the expected basic correlations, these seem to confirm the internal consistency of the questionnaire in relation to nominal variables, since immigrants who have lived in Spain for longer are those who have obtained Spanish nationality; and those who do not have a work permit are students, unemployed, or work in the underground economy.

After the pilot survey, we were able to carry out the final survey. Once again, we used the snowball sampling approach. The sample was 173 immigrants. Regarding statistical analysis, descriptive analyses (frequencies) were carried out, and then, we tried to find out relationships between variables, taking into account that the vast majority of the

variables of the questionnaire are qualitative, so we were limited to do qualitative analysis, specifically contingency tables.

It is important to note some limitations of the research. First, maybe the sampling approach (snowball) does not allow for obtaining a fully representative sample, so we must be prudent when generalizing the conclusions. And, secondly, the absence of a sample of Spanish people does not allow to compare the findings. For example, we can not compare the level of crime committed by immigrants and the level of crime committed by Spanish. This would be interesting for future analyses.

6. Results

6.1. Profile of immigrants

In Figure 4, we can see a summary of the profile of immigrants surveyed. It shows the frequencies of the 11 sociodemographic variables that we consider most relevant to create an image of the settled immigrant in Malaga.

Figure 4. Profile of immigrants

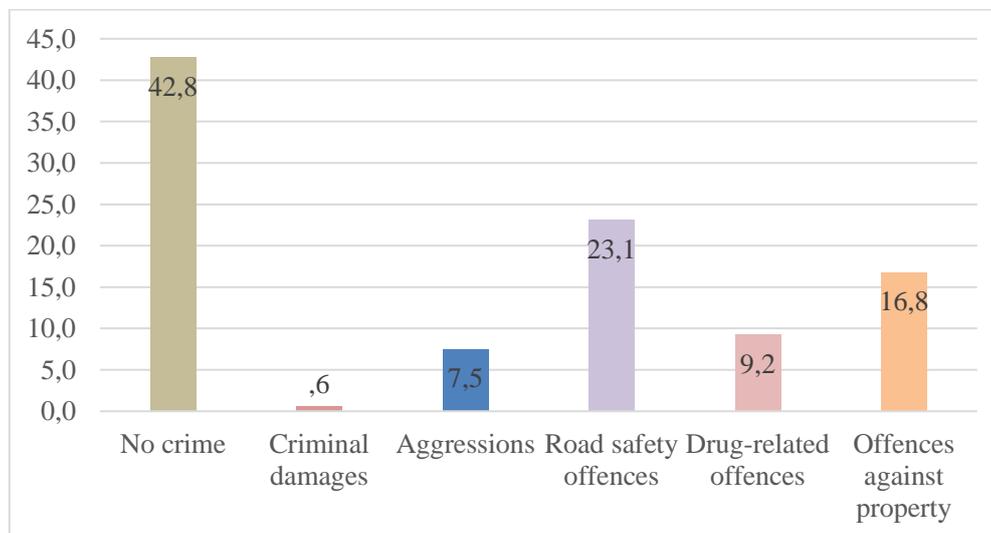
1. Sex	53% Man 47% Woman
2. Age	73% between 18-42 years old
3. Origin	57% South America 25% Magreb 6% Sub-Saharan Africa 3% Asia
4. Years living in Malaga	55% living 11 years or more
5. Spanish nationality	29%
6. Residence permit	92%
7. Marital status	40% Single 30% Married 25% Partner
8. Living with	60% first degree relative
9. Occupation	55% Working 24% Unemployed 17% Studying
10. Education	44% Secondary Education 17% University studies 15% Primary Education 11% No schooling
11. Self-perception about economic situation	42 % Good 24% Bad 33% So-so

In general, we can say that the immigrant settled in Malaga is a young person, from South America, who has lived in Malaga for many years, without Spanish nationality, with residence permit, single, living with family, working and with secondary education. At first glance, it does not look like a risk profile. If we have to imagine an immigrant who is a criminal, we will usually think of someone who has not lived in the place for a long time, without residence permit, who does not live with the family, unemployed and poorly educated. Therefore, it is important to pay attention to the personal circumstances and context of the immigrants who say they have committed crimes.

6.2. Self-reported crime

The graph below (Figure 5) shows crime committed by categories; this is, the self-reported crime:

Figure 5. Crime committed by categories (%)



Source: own elaboration

42,8% of immigrants has no committed any crime, so the 57,2% has committed at least one crime. Of this 57,2%, 23,1% are road safety offences, such as driving under the influence of alcohol; 16,8% are offences against property, such as thefts; 9,2% are drug-related offences; 7,5% are aggressions (physical or verbal); and 0,6% are criminal damages, such as vandalism.

More than half of the sample has committed crime, what is a significant amount. But the question is: do immigrants commit many crimes? To answer this, it is necessary to

compare with crime committed with Spanish, what is not possible now. Therefore, answering our first hypothesis (the level of crime committed by settled immigrants is not high) is complicated. We can affirm that a relevant percentage of the sample has committed some crime, but we can not affirm, in general, that this is a lot or a little.

From contingency tables that relate each variable of the questionnaire to the variable “crime”, we have selected those that are most strongly related (most significant chi – square value). That is, those variables than may better explain crime committed by settled immigrants. We have classified these variables into indicators. There are five indicators that influence crime of settled immigrants: economic and education level, social roots, the neighbourhood, victimisation, and perception about the police and justice.

For reasons of space, we will only pay attention to the indicator that has the greatest explicative weight (highest statistical significance): the neighbourhood. This indicator is composed of six variables:

1. Frequency of drug sales in the neighbourhood (p=0,012).
2. Frequency of vandalism in the neighbourhood (p=0,006).
3. Frequency of alcohol consumption in the street (p=0,035).
4. Frequency of violence between the neighbors (p=0,006).
5. The neighbors help each other or not (p=0,036).
6. The neighbors are united or not (p=0,006).

It seems that immigrants who live in troubled neighborhoods, where there is crime and violence, and there is less unity or commitment, are those who commit more crimes. This is consistent with criminological theories that relate the environment to crime, such as the social disorganization theory, the broken windows theory or the social learning theory⁴.

Those immigrants who live in less problematic neighbourhoods commit less crime. So, living in a troubled neighborhood is the risk factor that best explains crime committed by immigrants.

In the figures below (Figure 6 and 7) we can see represented two of the six variables that make up this indicator, and the relations with crime:

⁴ See Shaw, C. & McKay, H. (1942); Kelling, G. & Wilson, J. (1982) and Bandura, A. (1971).

Figure 6

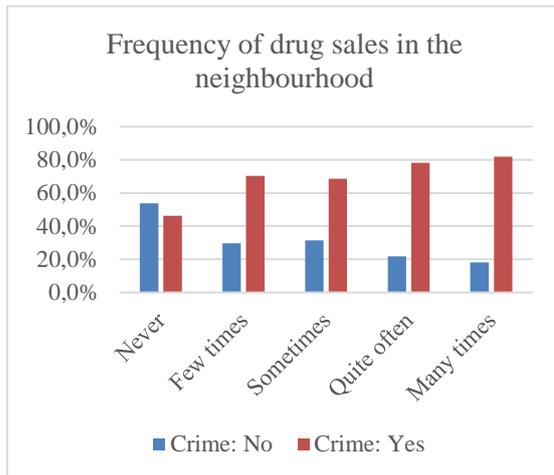
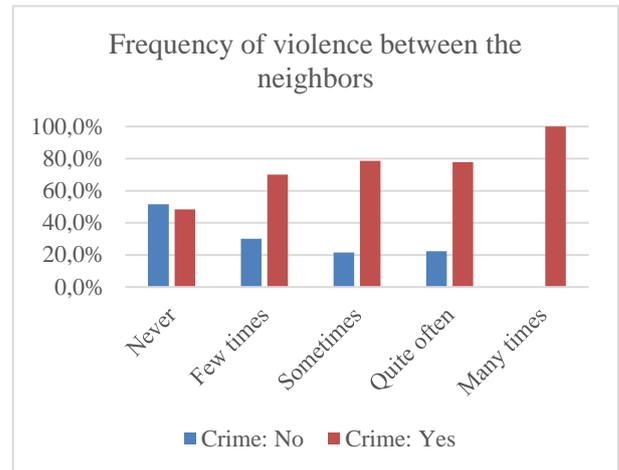


Figure 7



Source: own elaboration

The horizontal axis indicates how often the situation occurs (from never to many times)⁵. The vertical axis indicates the percentage of immigrants who say they have committed a crime or not. In both figures we can see that when the frequency of these behaviors increases (drug sales and violence between neighbors), the percentage of immigrants who say they have committed crimes also increases. In other words, the percentage of immigrants who say they have not committed a crime is higher when those situations are more infrequent.

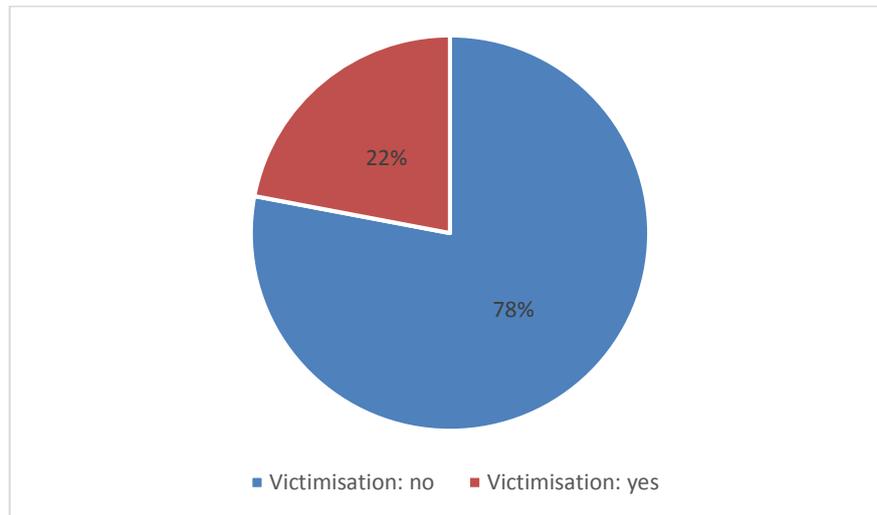
Our second hypothesis (the lack of social roots in the host context explains the crime committed by settled immigrants) has not been verified, because although the lack of social roots is related to crime, what explains crime best is the neighbourhood.

6.3. Victimisation

The graph below (Figure 8) shows the victimisation suffered, during the last year, by the immigrants of the sample:

⁵ The variable refers to the respondent's opinion/perception.

Figure 8. Victimization suffered by the immigrants



Source: own elaboration

22% of the sample says they have suffered a crime⁶. That is, 38 of 173 immigrants surveyed. Once again, we can not say if that is a lot or a little, because we have not a sample of Spanish to compare. What we can try to answer is: what factors are related to victimization?

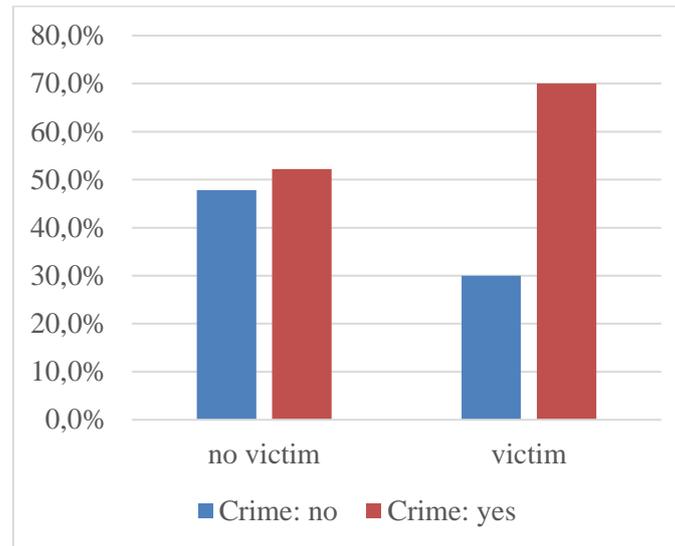
There are four indicators that influence the victimization suffered by the immigrants: social roots, the neighbourhood, the administrative situation, and crime experience. As we have said before, each indicator is composed of variables, and those indicators are the most strongly related to victimization (they are more statistically significant). The indicator that has the greatest explicative weight is crime experience. This is composed of two variables:

1. Crime committed ($p=0,018$).
2. Crime committed in country of origin ($p=0,008$).

In the graph below (Figure 9) we can see the first of these variables.

⁶ Including violent and non-violent crimes, suffered both in the neighbourhood and outside.

Figure 9. Victimization and crime



Source: own elaboration

So, being a victim of a crime is related to crime experience. The percentage of immigrants who have committed a crime among those immigrants who have been a victim is 70%, versus the 30% who have not committed a crime. These percentages are similar among the immigrants who have not been a victim. This means that crime and victimisation are related phenomena, and the immigrants who commit crimes are victims too. Maybe the fact of living in a troubled neighbourhood, what is the factor that best explains crime committed by these immigrants, exposes them to victimisation too.

6.4. Perception about the police and criminal justice system

We have four variables related to perceptions about the police and criminal justice system, two referred to the police, and two referred to criminal justice system:

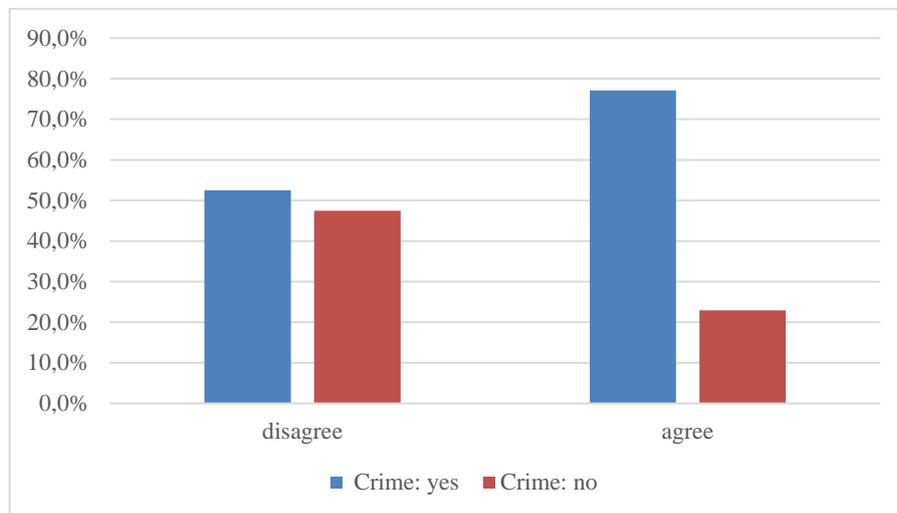
1. The police treat the poor worse.
2. The police treat minorities worse.
3. The justice system treats the poor worse.
4. The justice system treats minorities worse.

The factor that is more strongly related to these perceptions is crime experience. Specifically, have committed a crime and have been victimized. Maybe the response of the police and the justice system to individual cases influence the opinion of immigrants about these institutions. This is, maybe the immigrants who have committed a crime or

have been victims of a crime have had a bad experience with the police and the justice system. These are just hypothesis that should be verified.

In the graph below (Figure 10) we can see the relationship between have committed a crime and opinion about the police. Specifically, with the second variable (The police treat minorities worse):

Figure 10. The police treat ethnic minorities worse

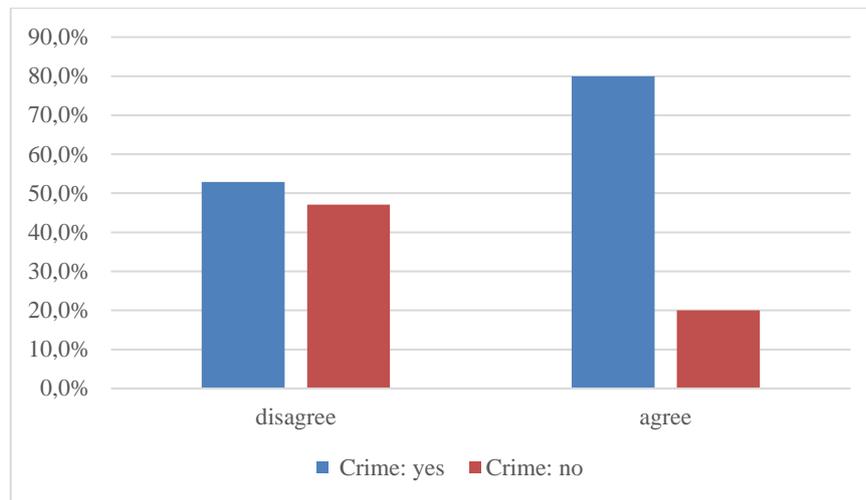


Source: own elaboration. $p=0,002$

Among the immigrants who agree with the sentence: “the police treat ethnic minorities worse”, 77% have committed a crime, versus the 23% who have not committed a crime.

In the next graph (Figure 11) we see the relationship between have committed a crime and opinion about the criminal justice system. Specifically, with the fourth variable:

Figure 11. Justice treats ethnic minorities worse



Source: own elaboration. $p=0,008$

Among the immigrants who agree with the sentence: “the justice system treats ethnic minorities worse”, 80% have committed a crime, versus the 20% who have not committed a crime.

So, the third hypothesis (the settled immigrants think that the police do not act with objective criteria, but with racial biases) and the fourth (the settled immigrants think that the criminal justice system does not act with objective criteria, but with racial biases) have been validated.

7. Discussion

Immigration has an important impact on public opinion and the political debate, and it is usually related to crime. Many studies have investigated this relationship, but in Spain there has been no study that addresses the relationship between the conditions of the local host context and crime at a local level. We have interviewed 173 settled immigrants in the city of Malaga, using a previously validated questionnaire.

Findings indicate that the immigrant settled in Malaga is a young person, from South America, who has lived in Malaga for many years, without Spanish nationality, with residence permit, single, living with family, working and with secondary education. Regarding self-reported crime by immigrants, the 42,8% of immigrants have no committed any crime, so the 57,2% have committed at least one crime. The majority of this crime is related to road safety offences, followed by offences against property. The factor that is more strongly related to crime is a troubled neighbourhood. The



immigrants who live in troubled neighborhoods, where there is crime and violence, and there is less unity or commitment, are those who commit more crimes. Regarding victimisation, the 22% of the sample say they have suffered a crime. The indicator that has the greatest explicative weight is crime experience (have committed a crime). The percentage of immigrants who have committed a crime among those immigrants who have been a victim is 70%, versus the 30% who have not committed a crime. This means that crime and victimisation are related phenomena, and the immigrants who commit crimes are victims too.

Finally, findings regarding perception about the police and the criminal justice system indicate that the factor that is more strongly related to these perceptions is crime experience. Among the immigrants who agree with the sentence: “the police treat ethnic minorities worse”, 77% have committed a crime. Among the immigrants who agree with the sentence: “the justice system treats ethnic minorities worse”, this percentage is 80%.

So, we can summarize the findings in three:

1. The neighborhood influences the crime committed by immigrants.
2. Committing crimes and being a victim is related.
3. Immigrants who have committed crimes or have been victim of crime do not have a good opinion about the police and justice system. We can not affirm that the police or the criminal justice system treat immigrants worse, but we can say that the contact of immigrants with these institutions reduces their legitimacy.

In the future, we should to delve into the protection factors that have the greatest impact among the group of immigrants who have not committed crimes, and to delve into the reasons why immigrants, after contacting social control, have a bad opinion about the institutions. In addition, we should compare the findings of the sample of settled immigrants with a sample of Spanish.

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