

# Immigrant Victims of a Crime

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Figures used in this report were submitted voluntarily by clients who were victims of crimes and have received services at TPAC/WHCI between 2015 - 2019. Individuals using these tabulations are cautioned against drawing conclusions by making direct comparisons between races/ethnicities. Comparisons lead to simplistic and/or incomplete analyses that often create misleading perceptions, adversely affecting communities and their residents. Valid assessments are possible only with careful study and analysis of the range of unique conditions affecting each community and jurisdiction.

It is important to remember that crime is a social problem and therefore a concern of the entire community. The data user is therefore cautioned against comparing statistical data of individual tables. The intent behind sharing this information is to display the ways in which the burdens endured by immigrant communities across Philadelphia represent what happens on a national scale.

This document describes statistical data and direct experiences from the community being served by TPAC/WHCI. In some cases, the information described was gathered directly from police reports and/or a district attorney's office.

## Overview:

Hate crimes are on the rise in the state of Pennsylvania. Most recent data reported by the FBI displays how there were,

“81 hate crimes reported in Pennsylvania,” during 2018, “up from 45 in 2019. It is the highest figure since 2006. The increase was also experienced around the country, with 7,700 criminal incidents reported to the FBI in 2020. It was the highest number in a dozen years. Some community leaders say they are not surprised after a year unlike any other in recent memory — with police brutality, criminal justice protests and other high-profile stories dominating the headlines. Others said they suspect the true number of offenses to be even higher.”<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Anti-Defamation League. (2021, September 14). *WITF.org: FBI data: Pa. hate crimes hit 14-year high in 2020*. Anti-Defamation League. Retrieved September 16, 2021, from <https://philadelphia.adl.org/news/witf-org-fbi-data-pa-hate-crimes-hit-14-year-high-in-2020/>.

Considering such factors, it is important to break down increases in hate crime for communities of immigrants specifically. A big factor in hate-based crimes is due to the rhetoric othering non-Citizens. The result has been an environment of fear, and the contributing factors are both socioeconomic and sociopolitical.

The growing immigrant populations across the city are mainly Asian and Latin American. Philadelphia has seen, “a more than 27% (50,700-person) increase in the population of people who classified themselves as Hispanic or Latino and a nearly 39% increase in Asian residents (36,900 people).”<sup>2</sup> Across Philadelphia, this growth has also coincided with an increase in violent crimes towards these communities:

“In Philadelphia, reports to the city of anti-Asian American hate tripled between 2019 and 2020. People in its Asian communities are shaken and traumatized, constantly on edge, worried they or a loved one could be the next person assaulted or killed while walking on the street or riding the subway or doing their job. Some of the city’s 120,000 Asian residents, particularly those of East and Southeast Asian descent, say they are avoiding taking public transportation, walking alone, or going out at night.”<sup>3</sup>

These experiences are mirrored in the national crime statistics reports provided by the Center for the Study of Hate & Extremism at California State University, San Bernardino. Their report has displayed a 169% increase in Anti-Asian hate crimes among 15 major cities during the first quarter of 2021.<sup>4</sup>

The surge of Anti-Asian racism incidents is also echoed in PCDC’s Anti-Asian Racism Incident Survey, which was conducted by Philadelphia Chinatown Development Corporation in mid-March 2021. It shows 1 in 7 of 315 Chinese or Asian respondents (23%) have personally

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<sup>2</sup> Logroño, R. (2021, May 11). *Philly's growing Latino COMMUNITIES REFLECT America's future*. WHYY. Retrieved September 17, 2021, from <https://whyy.org/articles/phillys-growing-latino-communities-reflect-americas-future/>.

<sup>3</sup> Gammage, J. (2021, May 13). *Anti-Asian hate isn't New. aapi communities in PHILLY have faced decades of violence*. <https://www.inquirer.com>. Retrieved September 17, 2021, from <https://www.inquirer.com/news/a/asian-american-hate-crimes-philadelphia-violence-20210513.html>.

<sup>4</sup> Yam, K. (2021, April 28). *New report finds 169 PERCENT surge In ANTI-ASIAN hate crimes during the first quarter*. NBCNews.com. Retrieved September 17, 2021, from <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/asian-america/new-report-finds-169-percent-surge-anti-asian-hate-crimes-n1265756>.

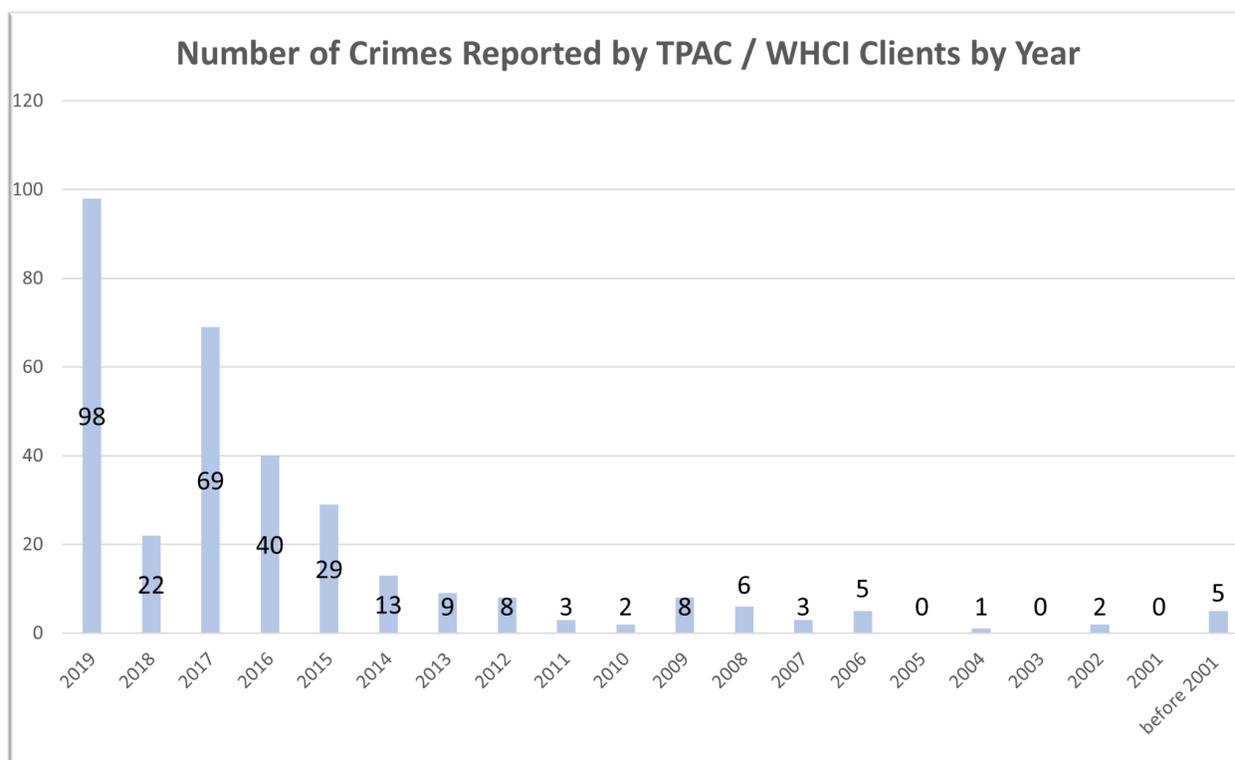
experienced an anti-Asian racism incident.<sup>5</sup> It is reflected in Figure 2, showing a drastic increase of Asian and Pacific Islanders accessing services at TPAC/ WHCI.

Hate crimes against Latinos have increased year after year since 2015. While the city of Philadelphia hasn't been able to collect area-specific statistics,

“according to the 2018 FBI Hate Crime Statistics report, the latest data available. In 2018, there were 485 incidents and 671 victims in anti-Hispanic or Latino incidents, compared with 427 incidents and 552 victims in the previous year, the agency's data shows. Comparing 2018 to 2015, when there were 299 incidents and 392 victims, the number of incidents rose 62%.”<sup>6</sup>

The increased hatred and fear of immigrant communities has been felt by TPAC d.b.a. WHCI's clients. Figure 1 mirrors the large-scale increases in violent crime, with 127 clients having reported 98 crimes:

**Figure 1**

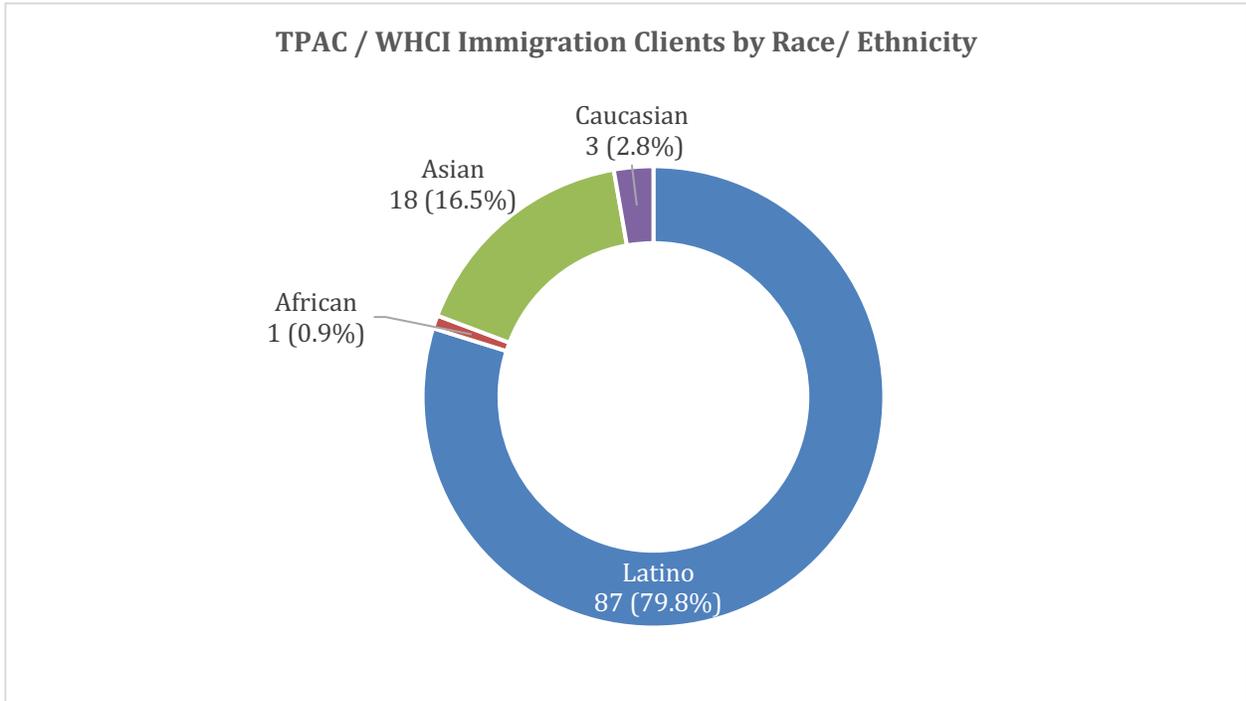


<sup>5</sup> Philadelphia Chinatown Development Corporation (2021, March) *PCDC's Anti-Asian Racism Incident Survey*. Retrieved 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2021, from <https://chinatown-pcdc.org/pcdc-anti-asian-racism-incident-report-march-2021/>

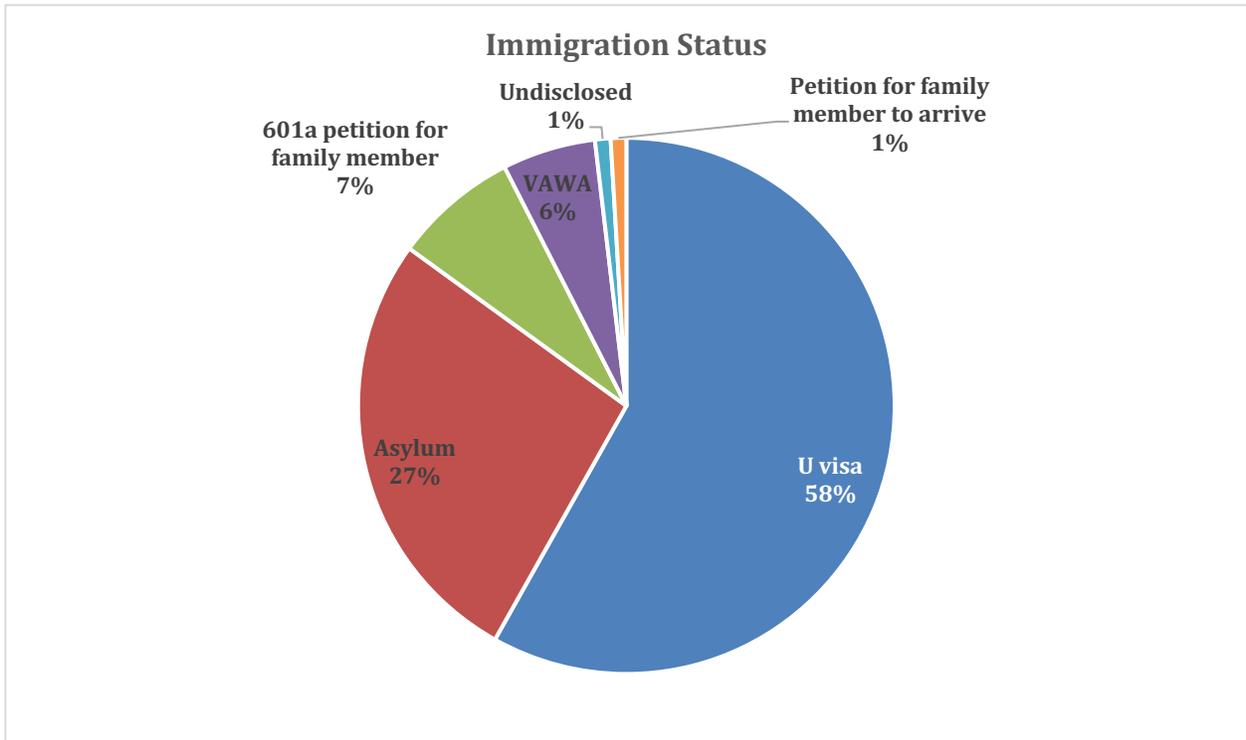
<sup>6</sup> Chavez, N. (2020, August 3). *Attacks against Latinos in the US didn't stop after El PASO mass shooting*. CNN. Retrieved September 17, 2021, from <https://www.cnn.com/2020/08/02/us/hate-crimes-latinos-el-paso-shooting/index.html>.

The figures below display the diversity of our clients. Figure 2 breaks down the race/ethnicity of immigrant clients. Figures 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7 break down the immigration status of clientele and country of origin based on the type of petition. Figure 8 displays the countries where clients are from, and Figure 9 shows regions of Mexico clients are from.

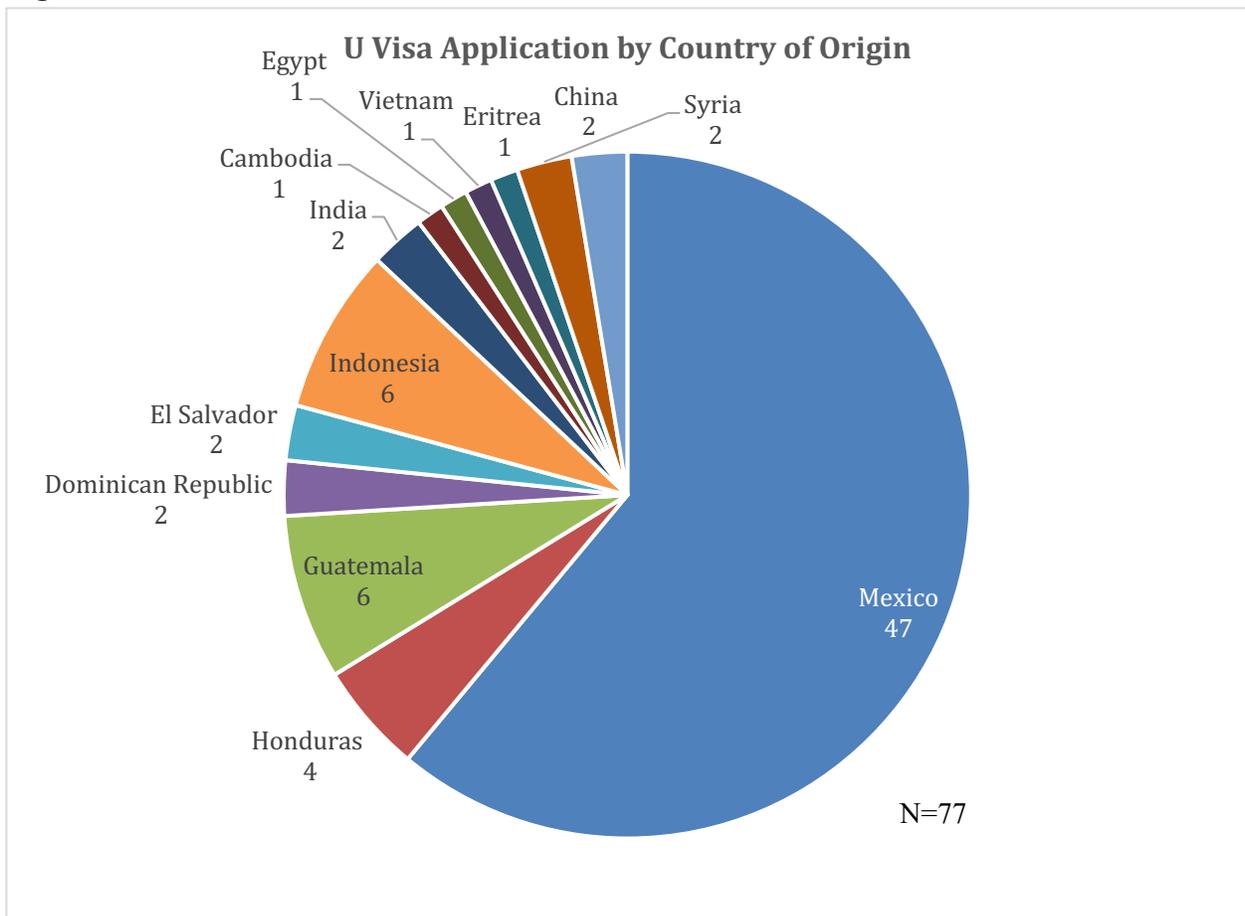
**Figure 2**



**Figure 3**



**Figure 4**



**Figure 5**

VAWA Petitions - 7 clients in total: 5 females and 2 males. They are from:

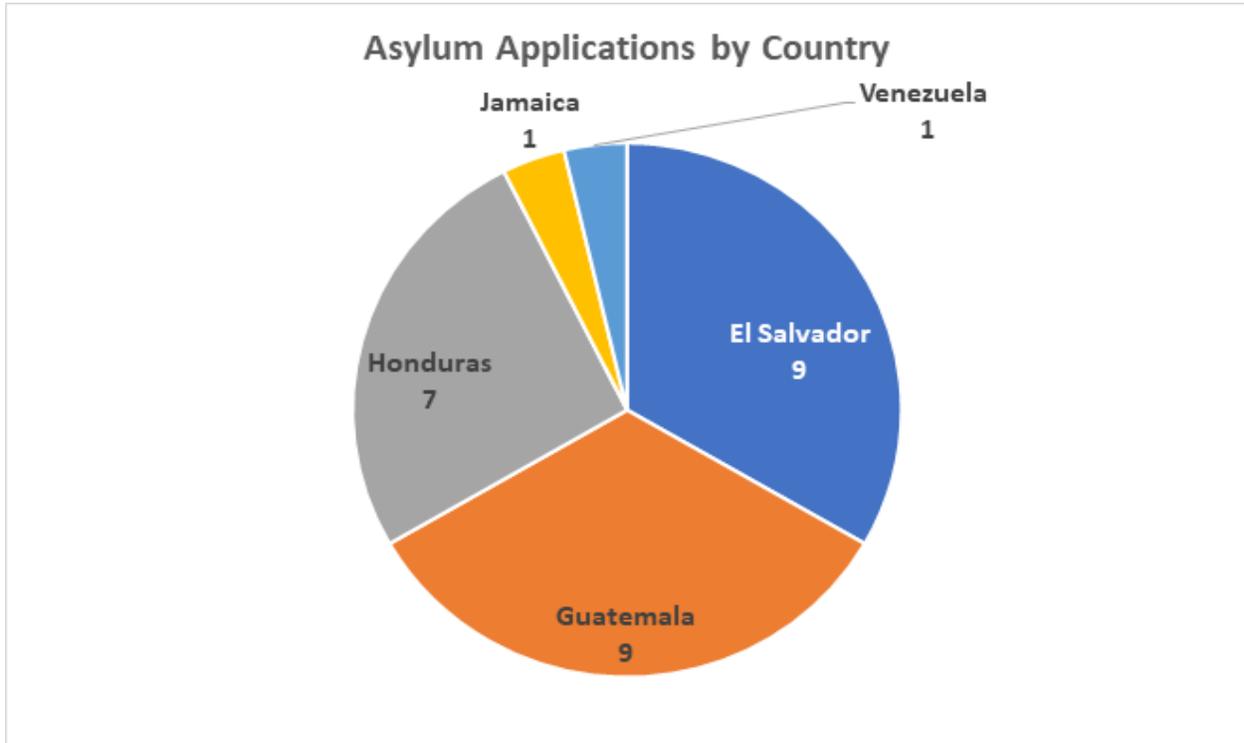
- Brazil
- Gabon
- India
- Dominican Republic
- Cambodia
- Honduras
- Israel

**Figure 6**

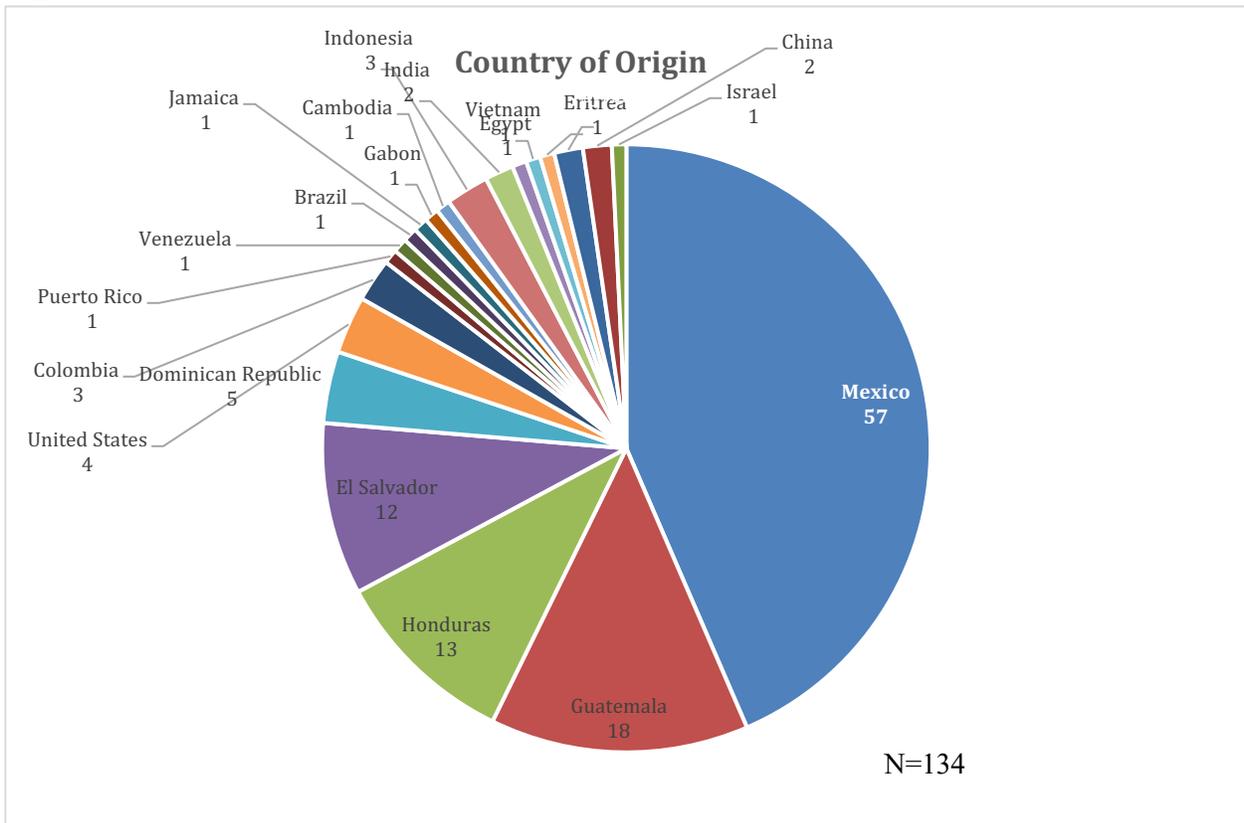
601a Petitions - 8 clients in total: 5 males and 3 females. They are from:

- Mexico
- El Salvador
- Dominican Republic
- Puerto Rico

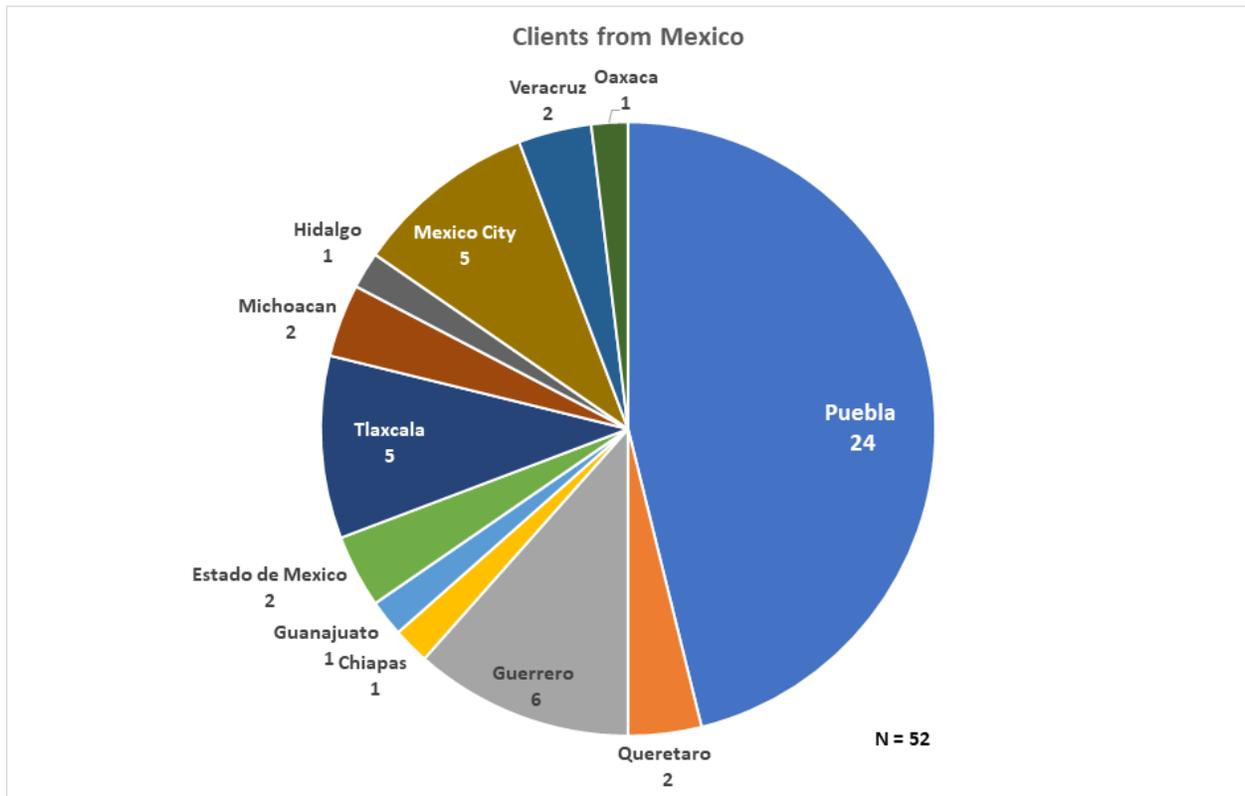
**Figure 7**



**Figure 8**



**Figure 9**



With the dramatic increase in hate-based crimes, especially among the aforementioned communities of Latino and Asian immigrants, it's important to delve into what contributes most to an environment of hate.

**Socioeconomic Factors:**

Naturalized Citizens and U.S-born Citizens have more financial stability, and a legal status that helps them to avoid the barriers experienced by non-Citizens. Professors Min Xie and Eric P. Baumer break down the factors that contribute to the victimization of the undocumented.

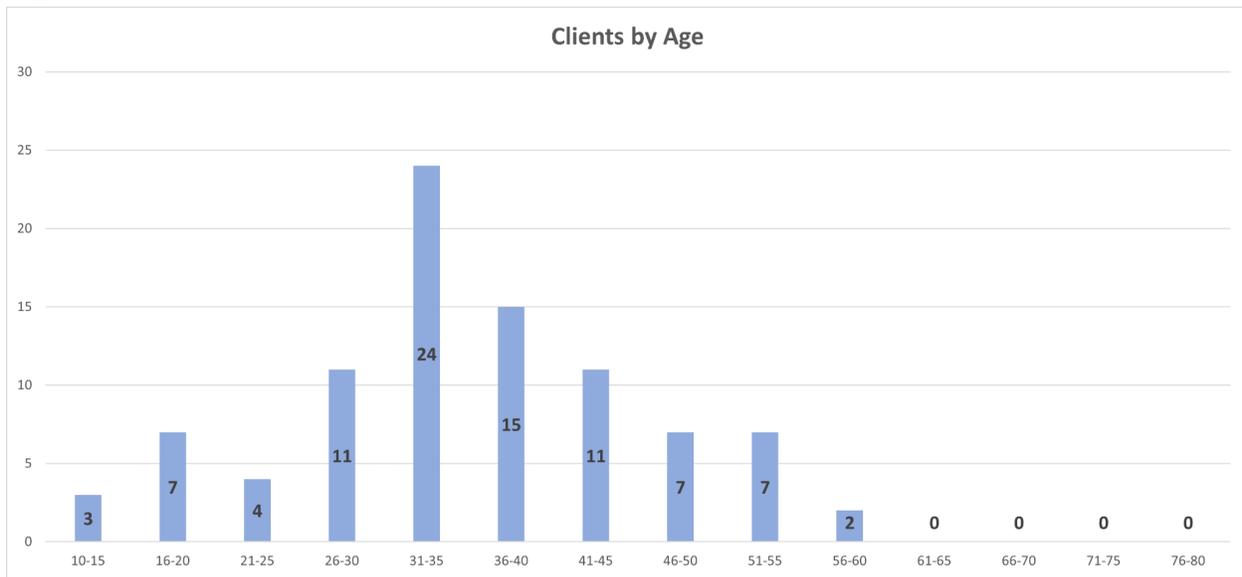
They emphasize that,

“undocumented immigrants tend to be younger, less educated, more likely to be renters, and less apt to be married (Gelatt & Zong, 2018), all of which have been connected to routine activities and lifestyles that increase crime exposure (Cohen & Felson, 1979; Cohen et al., 1981). Additionally, compared with other immigrants, the undocumented tend to arrive in the United States under conditions of extreme economic deprivation and to experience ongoing financial strain while in the country (Brown & Bean, 2006), a structural feature also emphasized as conducive to victimization in both lifestyle-routine activities

theories and structural-choice theories of victimization (see Meier & Miethe, 1993).”<sup>7</sup>

These barriers, and their contribution to the financial strain experienced by the documented, is also displayed in the lack of access to health care and social services. Figure 10 breaks down the age groups of clients. The age range of most crime victims (68%) are from 26 to 45 years old, representing a large portion of the workforce in Latino communities; reinforcing the point that the assaults are not only on ethnicity, but also socioeconomic status, immigration status, and social norms. The victim can become an easy target because they tend to carry cash from work.

**Figure 10**



On the topic of confronting racial disparities in medical care, it is important to emphasize that, “Compared with whites, members of racial and ethnic minorities are less likely to receive preventive health services and often receive lower-quality care. They also have worse health outcomes for certain conditions.”<sup>8</sup> The lack of ability to afford or access needed services, and poor health outcomes are intrinsically linked.

These issues have also become exacerbated by the pandemic. It’s been noted by the Commonwealth Fund that, “Insurance for U.S. adults has historically been tied to employment, which reflects racial and ethnic economic inequality. Black and Latinx/Hispanic adults are much

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<sup>7</sup> Xie, Min, and Eric P. Baumer. "Immigrant status, citizenship, and victimization risk in the United States: New findings from the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS)." *Criminology*(2021).

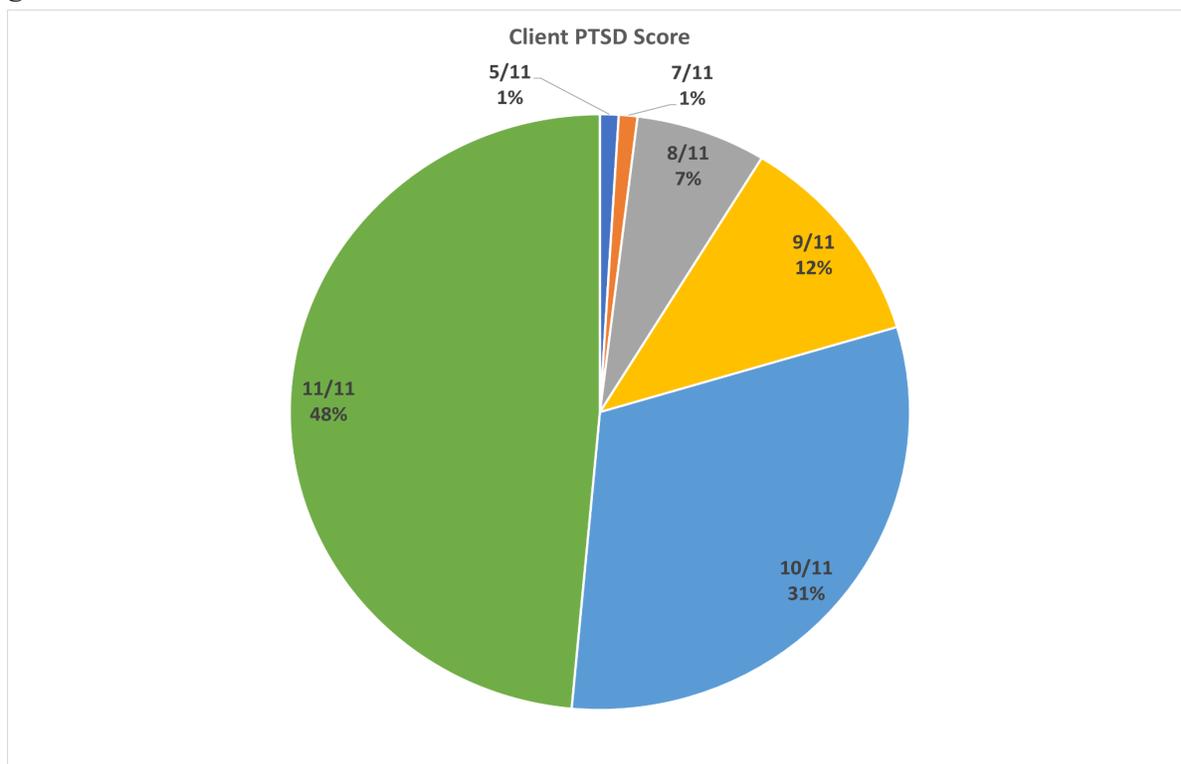
<sup>8</sup> Hostetter, M., & Klein, S. (2018, September 27). *In focus: Reducing racial disparities in health care by confronting racism*. The Commonwealth Fund. Retrieved September 20, 2021, from <https://www.commonwealthfund.org/publications/2018/sep/focus-reducing-racial-disparities-health-care-confronting-racism>.

less likely to receive coverage through their employer.”<sup>9</sup> The desire to seek care is barred by fears of medical debt, which in the United States can lead to long-term financial issues.

### Sociopolitical Factors:

A major reason for the existence of these obstacles is, “that immigration policy and enforcement have an effect on the health of Hispanic immigrants by increasing stress and discouraging people from seeking care. And newer research suggests that stressors related to immigration can have a spillover effect on the health and wellbeing of U.S.-born Hispanics (i.e., those not subject to deportation) as well as foreign-born Hispanics.” Most of the clients, who are immigrants are the victims of crime. Shown in Figure 11, 98% of our clients suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder. Adding to the difficulties of their access of healthcare services, they suffer many times of hyper-vigilance and paranoid behaviors.

**Figure 11**



An example of such law are welfare programs like Medicare and Medicaid have been expanded through the Affordable Care Act, these policies tend to exclude the undocumented and documented immigrants. Even though they could have contributed to the social security benefits for many years, they still are not qualified to receive any of the federal benefits. It is clear that,

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<sup>9</sup> Sohn H. (2017). Racial and Ethnic Disparities in Health Insurance Coverage: Dynamics of Gaining and Losing Coverage over the Life-Course. *Population research and policy review*, 36(2), 181–201. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11113-016-9416-y>

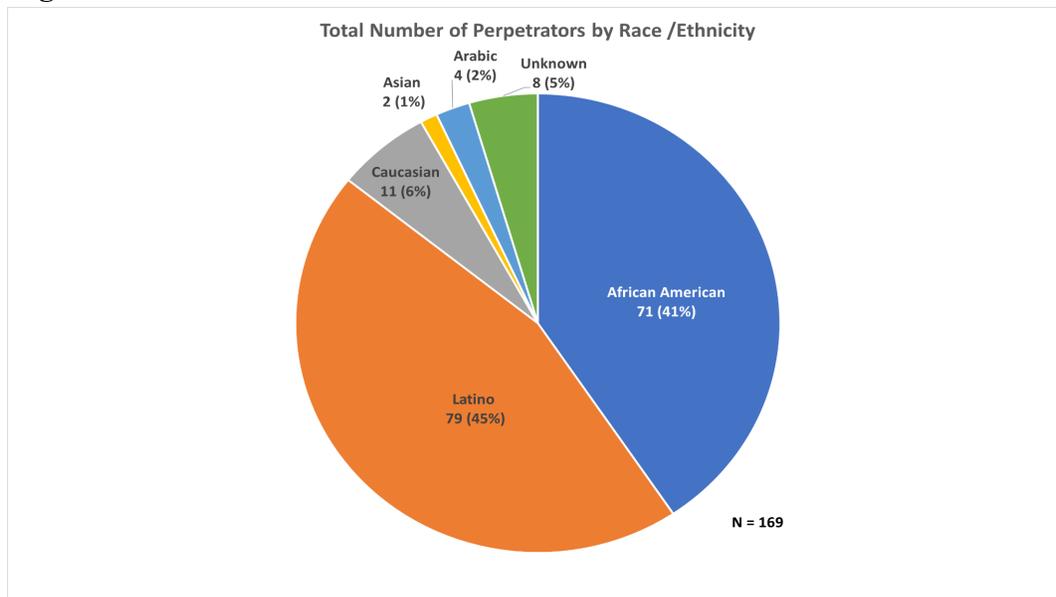
“disparities persist, particularly for Latinx/Hispanic communities, and national progress has stalled since 2016.”<sup>10</sup> A part of the stall is due to the rise of support for Nativist rhetoric in the United States.

This rhetoric, “ — that immigrants are invading the homeland — has gained ever-greater traction, and political acceptance, across the West amid dislocations wrought by vast waves of migration from the Middle East, Africa and Latin America. In its most extreme form, it is echoed in the online manifesto of the man accused of gunning down 22 people last weekend in El Paso.”<sup>11</sup> It’s important to emphasize that this theory has made its way into the mainstream of the GOP’s ideology.

The result is, “a dangerous dynamic in which believers view immigrants and nonwhite citizens as an existential threat to their communities. And the theory is not a purely academic endeavor; it seeks to mobilize believers into action against their supposed ‘replacement.’”<sup>12</sup> The issue doesn’t stop with dangerous ideas or actions. It is so pervasive it has inspired anti-immigration law on a national level, and has undermined local efforts to provide a place of sanctuary for the undocumented.

Despite the preconceived notions upheld by right wing extremism, information reported by clientele demonstrates a lack of correlation between perpetrator and type of citizenship. Figures 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, and 17 break down perpetrators of crimes reported to TPAC d.b.a. WHCI by race/ethnicity.

**Figure 12**

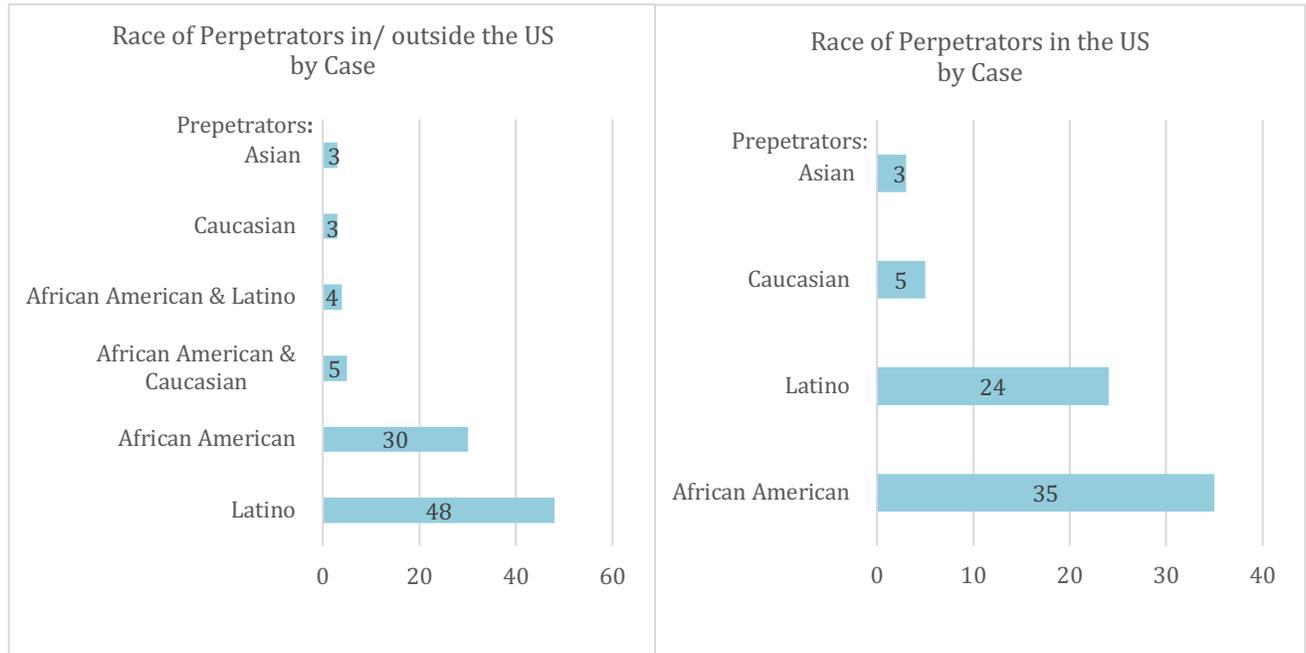


<sup>10</sup> Ibid. 7

<sup>11</sup> Ramírez, N. M. C. (2020, September 7). A racist conspiracy theory called The 'great replacement' has made its way from far-right media to the GOP. Business Insider. Retrieved September 20, 2021, from <https://www.businessinsider.com/racist-great-replacement-conspiracy-far-alt-right-gop-mainstream-2020-9>.

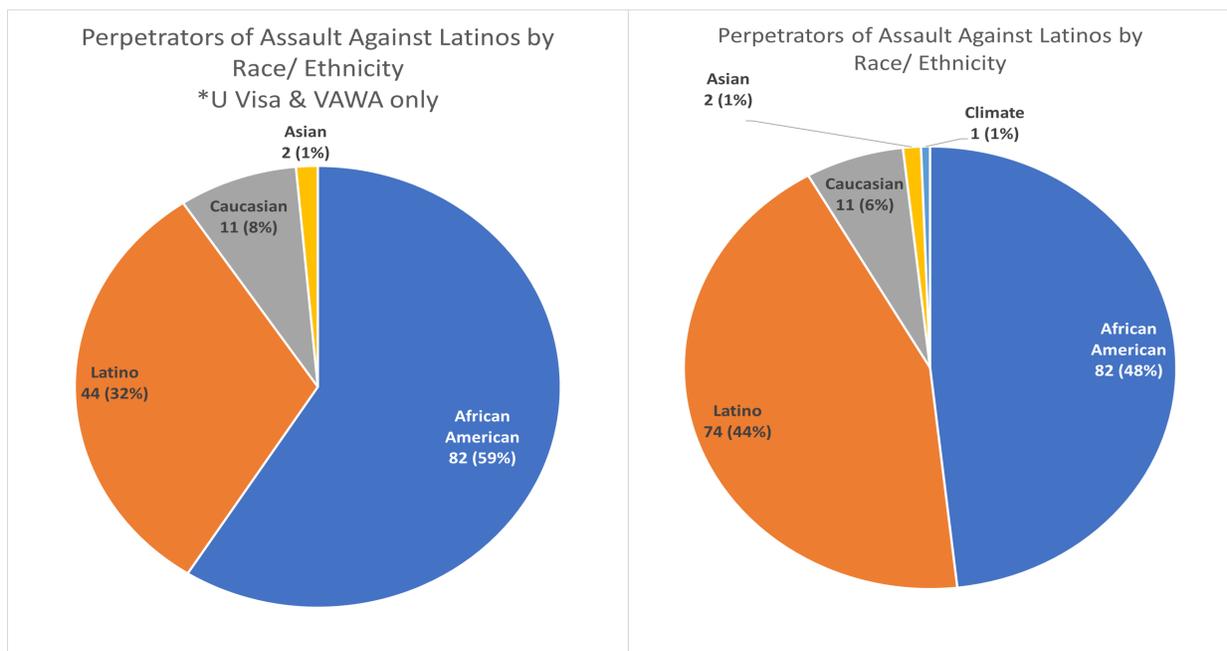
<sup>12</sup> Ibid. 10

**Figure 13**

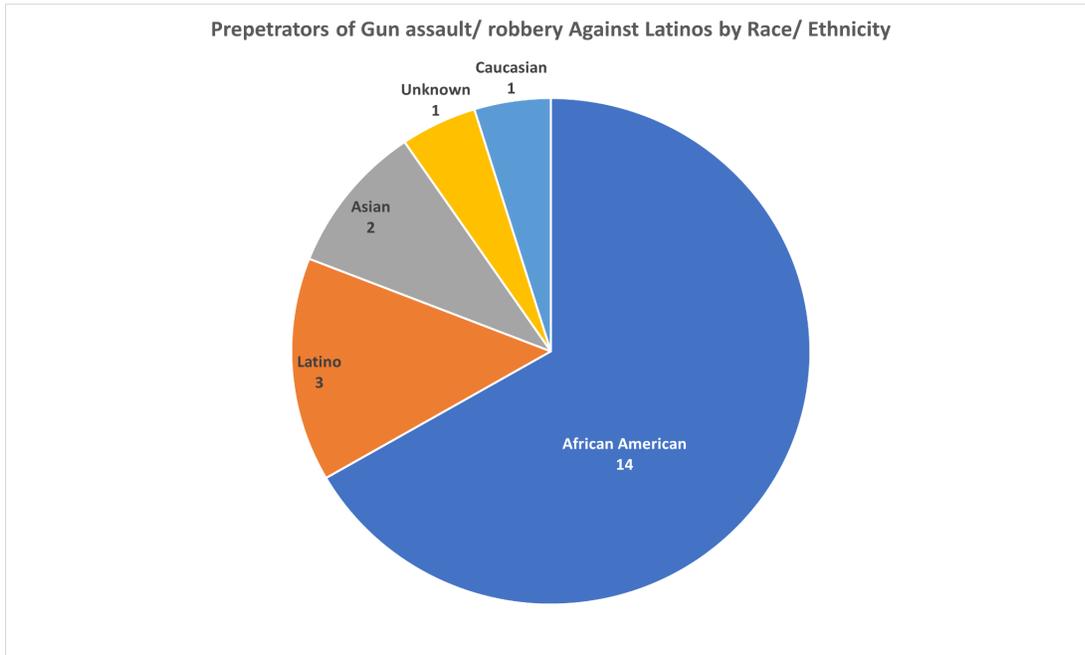


Of all crimes committed against our Latino clients, 52.2% were committed solely by African Americans (Table on the right). Out of the total number of perpetrators of the crimes reported, 41% were African American (Table on the left). We believe this is neither a racial or ethnic issue, but a socioeconomic factor and the combination of the above circumstances that create an environment that allows for the types of crimes described in this document. This information was in line with the pattern presented in the report of 2018.

**Figure 14**



**Figure 15**

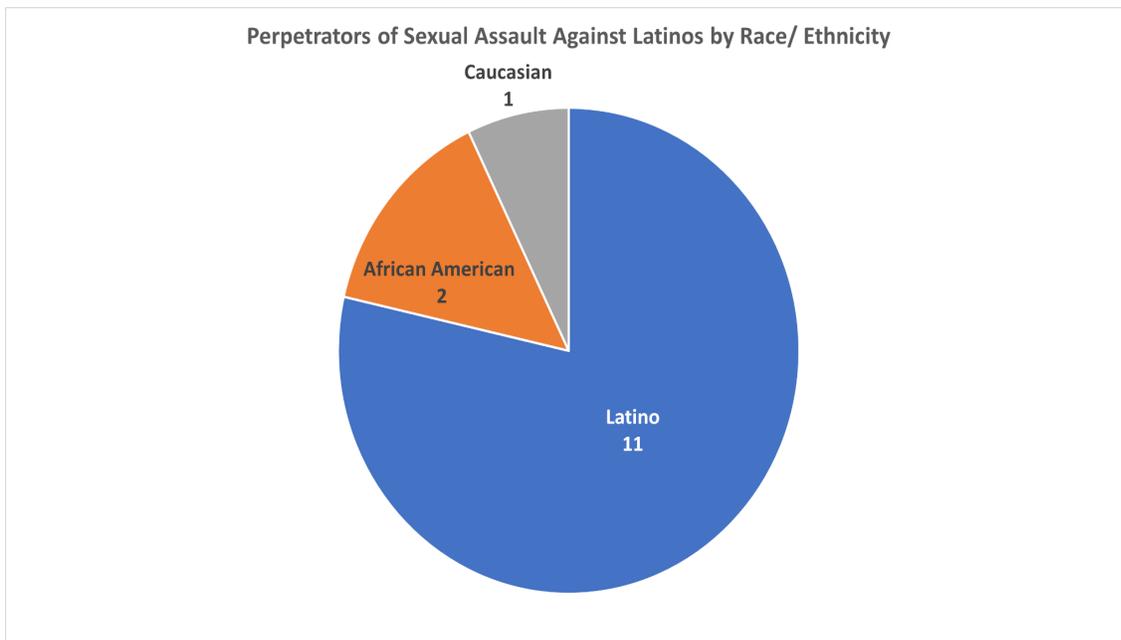


**Figure 16**

Domestic violence - There have been a total of 7 domestic violence cases against Latinos. 100% of them were committed by Latinos. Also in Figure 19, there is an increase of domestic violence and domestic intra-partner sexual abuse due to COVID-19, lockdown, unstable economic circumstances, according to the comments shared from the clients from TPAC d.b.a WHCI.

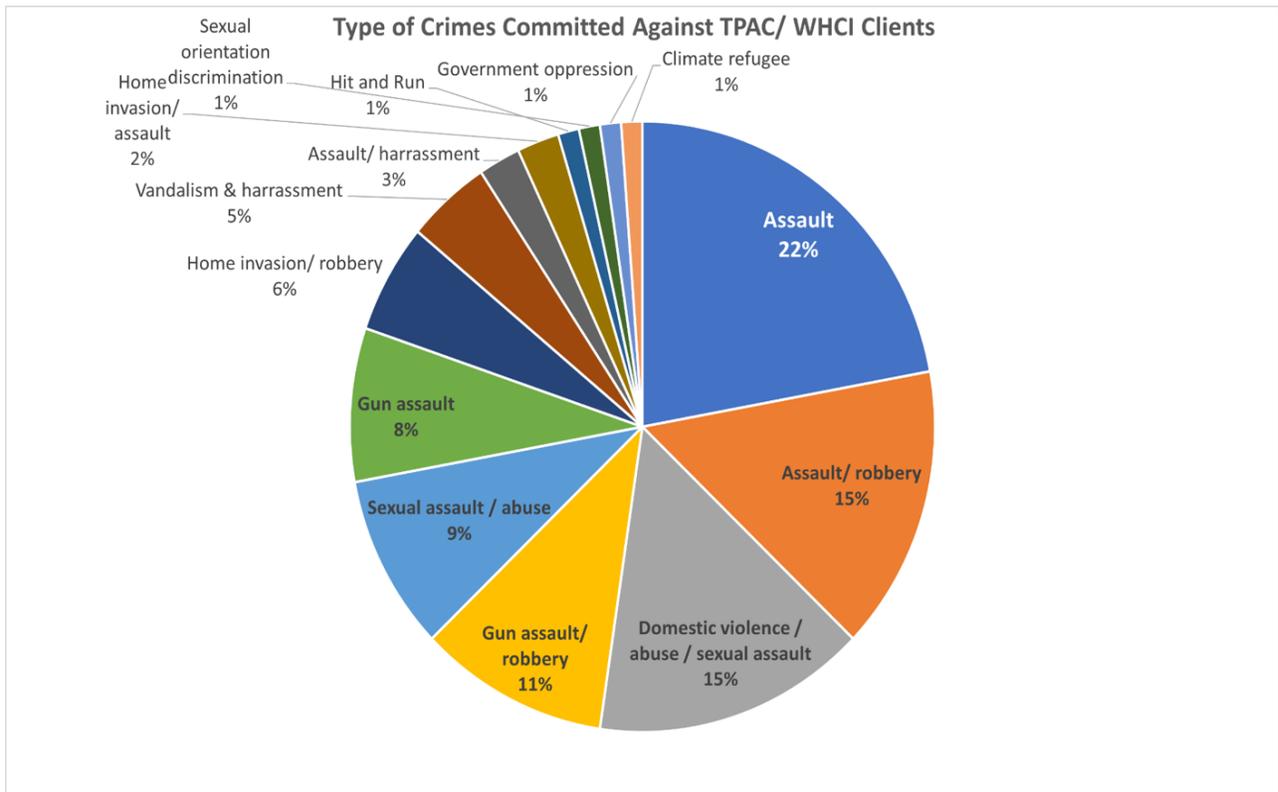
**Figure 17**

Sexual assault – There have been a total of 14 sexual assault cases. Of those 14 cases, the Caucasian perpetrator was against a Latino, 2 were committed by African Americans against Latinas and all committed by Latinos were intra partner sexual violence.



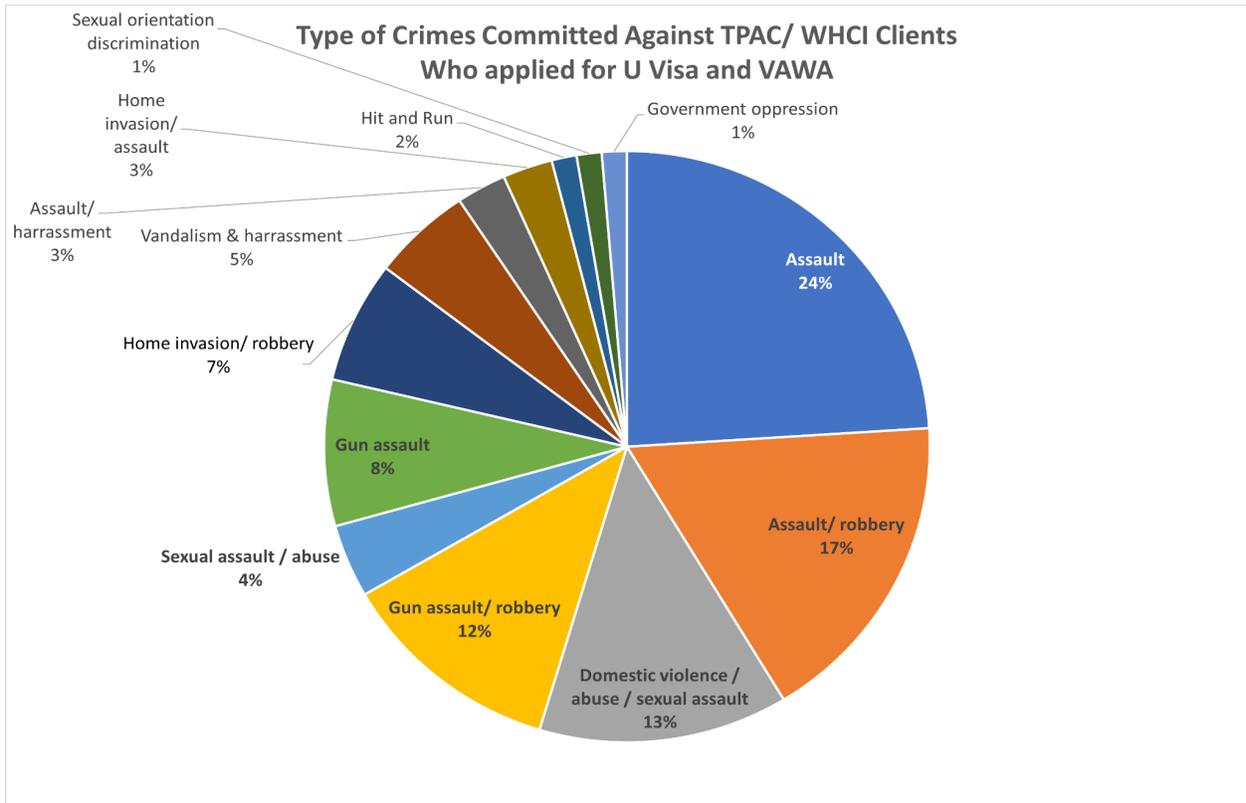
The coercive nature of anti-immigrant attitudes and “laws and policies enacted in response to the faulty fears that immigrants are dangerous contribute to their victimization by making immigrants, and other members of their communities, afraid to call on the police or otherwise draw attention to themselves. This lack of protection from the criminal justice system makes immigrants particularly attractive targets for victimization.”<sup>13</sup> Even the cities most resistant to this rhetoric, including Philadelphia, aren’t immune to the victimization of immigrants and coercion.

**Figure 18**

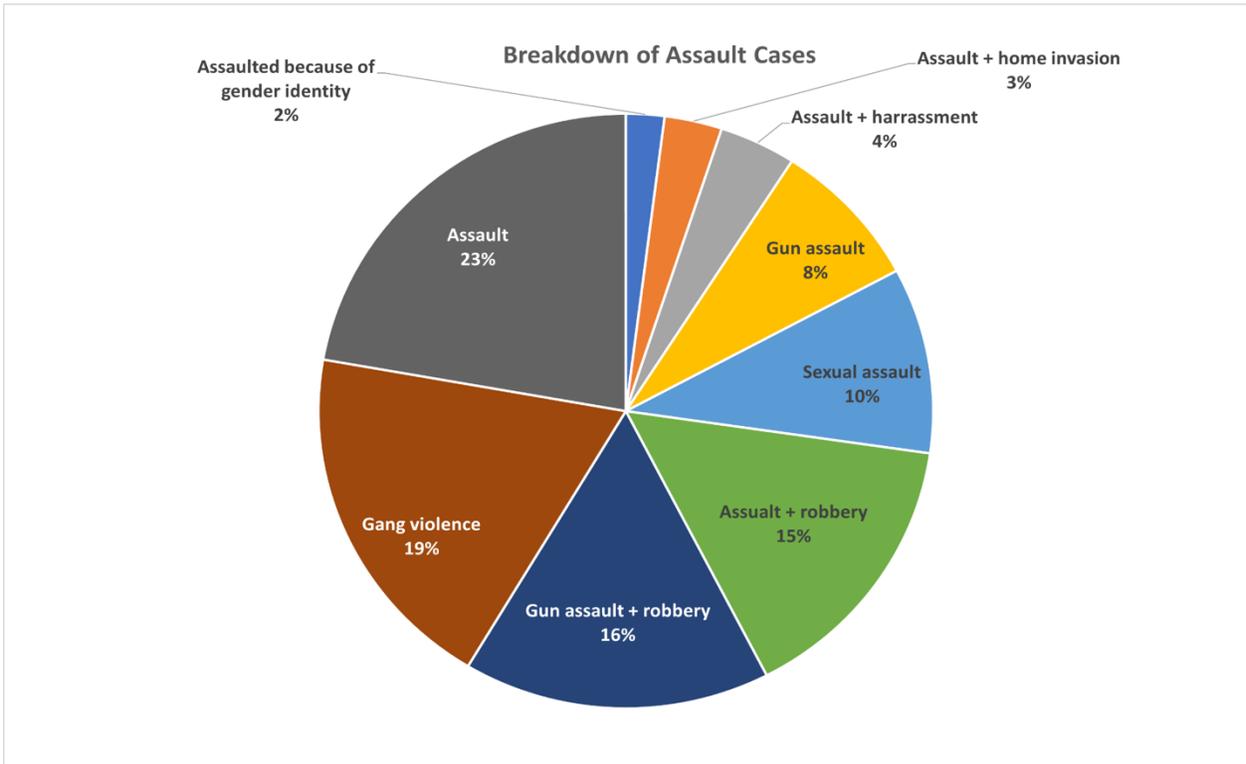


<sup>13</sup> Zatz, Marjorie S., and Hilary Smith. "Immigration, crime, and victimization: Rhetoric and reality." *Annual Review of Law and Social Science* 8 (2012): 147.

**Figure 19**



**Figure 20**



**Figure 21**

Reason for asylum	Number of Cases
Gang threats/ violence / intimidation	14
Domestic violence/ harassment	4
Sexual assault	3
Murder	2
Hate crime	2
Government oppression/ intimidation	1
Gun assault	1
Climate change	1

In 2018, ProPublica and the Philadelphia Inquirer investigated the city of Philadelphia’s ability to provide a place of refuge for the undocumented. It was,

“found that the city’s resistance to ICE’s agenda comes with some surprising caveats: On two dozen occasions, police, probation officers and even one of Kenney’s top deputies have quietly provided tips to ICE about undocumented immigrants who were charged with crimes. Other forms of information-sharing still continue, which shows that even the most extreme of sanctuary cities eventually bend to comply with a federal law that says local governments cannot restrict sharing immigration status with ICE.”<sup>14</sup>

There is no ability to trust that you will be protected when there is a history of hypocrisy related to enforcing the code of sanctuary cities. It is difficult to report a crime when there are no laws offering protection from discrimination or violence. The figure below breaks down violent crime cases by neighborhood.

**Figure 22**

Zip Code	Philadelphia Neighbourhood	Total Number of Crimes reported
19104	University City	1
19107	Center City	2
19111	Fox Chase	3
19120	Olney	3
19122	Norris Square	1
19134	Port Richmond	2
19139	Haddington	1
19140	Nicetown/ North Philadelphia	1
19143	Kingsessing	1
19145	South Philadelphia	7
19146	South Philadelphia	2
19147	South Philadelphia	16
19148	South Philadelphia	14
19149	Northeast Philadelphia	2

<sup>14</sup> Surana, K., & Gambacorta, D. (2018, October 18). *Even in Philadelphia, one of the most determined sanctuary cities, refuge is elusive*. ProPublica. Retrieved September 20, 2021, from <https://www.propublica.org/article/even-in-philadelphia-one-of-the-most-determined-sanctuary-cities-refuge-is-elusive>.

For members among the communities of immigrants that are also part of the LGBTQIA+ community, there is an additional looming fear since Pennsylvania is one of the few remaining states where they aren't a protected class of person. This means,

“no hate crime laws are violated even if people are attacked because of their sexuality or gender identity, and no discrimination laws violated if they're treated differently when it comes to housing, education or employment.

And shockingly, people can still kill a queer or trans person in Pa. and claim the “gay panic” defense — which says the victim's sexuality or gender identity was so provocative that it motivated the attack.”<sup>15</sup>

Clients at TPAC d.b.a WHCI are still subject to the effects of anti-immigration rhetoric, and LGBTQIA+ discrimination as well. The geographic information collected provides evidence that the fear of and lack of protection for immigrants is still a major point of concern in Philadelphia, with crimes being reported across several counties.

## **Conclusion:**

In conclusion, the report illustrates the statistical information gathered from the communities being served by TPAC d.b.a. WHCI in the year of 2019 and sheds light on the problems and burdens endured by the immigrant communities are facing across Philadelphia. It also attempts to represent what is happening on a national scale. Most clients TPAC d.b.a. WHCI is serving are Latinos who are currently applying for U visa. All are victims of crimes. Most of them face assault from African Americans in the US and suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder. We believe the phenomenon is neither caused by racial nor ethnic issues, but socioeconomic factors, for instance the financial strain the undocumented face, receiving salary in cash and finishing work at midnight. Most of them simply cannot afford the services needed, including the legal fee and medical care. More importantly, immigrants' access to the American legal system, health, social services and support is always barred in the face of victimization. This amalgamation of burden is known as ‘SAVAME’<sup>16</sup>, a term that defines the syndemic model of substance abuse, intimate partner violence, HIV infection, and mental health among Latinos. The inability to address one aspect of the model highlights the coercive nature of the related conditions.

Signs of the rise of the hate-based crimes towards immigrants across the city can also be found. The report reveals that while the overall population of Asians and Latin Americans in the city grows in 2019, the number of crimes reported increases. The ethnicity of clients is more

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid.12

<sup>16</sup> Dsouza, N., McGhee-Hassrick, E., Giordano, K. et al. Analysis of Network Characteristics to Assess Community Capacity of Latino-Serving Organizations in Philadelphia. *J Urban Health* (2021). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11524-021-00535-0>

diversified when compared to the previous years, with more clients coming from Asian countries such as China, India and Indonesia. The current social phenomenon can be attributed to the Trump's political administration which propagandizes and overtly reinforces the generalization of certain ethnic groups, for instance labelling COVID-19 as "horrible China Virus"<sup>17</sup> and rendering stereotypes about the Latinos as "drug dealers, criminal, rapists"<sup>18</sup>. It further encourages perpetrators to commit hate-related crimes against the undocumented and normalizes their discriminatory acts, especially towards the Asian/Pacific Islander community.

In light of the increase of crimes targeted at immigrants, it is crucial for TPAC d.b.a. WHCI to continually communicate with various program organizations and provide care effectively to aid our clients. Moreover, through "Using community-based participatory research methods, members of the targeted community are involved in the development, cultural appropriateness, implementation, and evaluation of interventions, and the trust and benefit of the community is better ensured." The Popular Opinion Leader (POL) program adapted and developed with Drexel's Dornsife School of Public Health, known as CRiSOL, is a prime example of putting this concept into practice. Clients engage in training and tools that create positive change in the health and well-being of their communities via peer-led intervention. They help improve social norms surrounding risk reduction and the Victims Compensation Assistance Program (VCAP) partnership will act as a connection with vital community resources. However, even though these services are of great help to many clients, the disconnection of the current referral system and needs of immigrant communities is evident.

### **Recommendations:**

TPAC d.b.a. WHCI has been striving to help victims and their families through providing psychological support and various kinds of services in the aftermath of crimes. There have been concerted efforts and collaborations with VCAP but unfortunately it is found that there are gaps and differences within the network of services. Other problems involve a lack of unified access criteria to the services needed, inconsistent services provided by different organizations and limited flexibility to cater for individual clients' needs. In response to the continuous disparities between organizations, TPAC d.b.a. WHCI has adopted the POL program to follow up with our clients' needs and help clients navigate the difficult social services network. We also endeavour to bridge the gap between different services and systems by offering a network of professionals, spreading the information of resources and referring individuals to direct services.

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<sup>17</sup> Katie Rogers, Lara Jakes and Ana Swanson (2021 March 18) *Trump Defends Using 'Chinese Virus' Label, Ignoring Growing Criticism*. The New York Times. Retrieved 30 September 2021 from <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/18/us/politics/china-virus.html>

<sup>18</sup> (2016 August 31) *'Drug dealers, criminals, rapists': What Trump thinks of Mexicans*. BBC. Retrieved from 30 September 2021 from <https://www.bbc.com/news/av/world-us-canada-37230916>