State Immigration Policy and the Well-Being of U.S. Workers
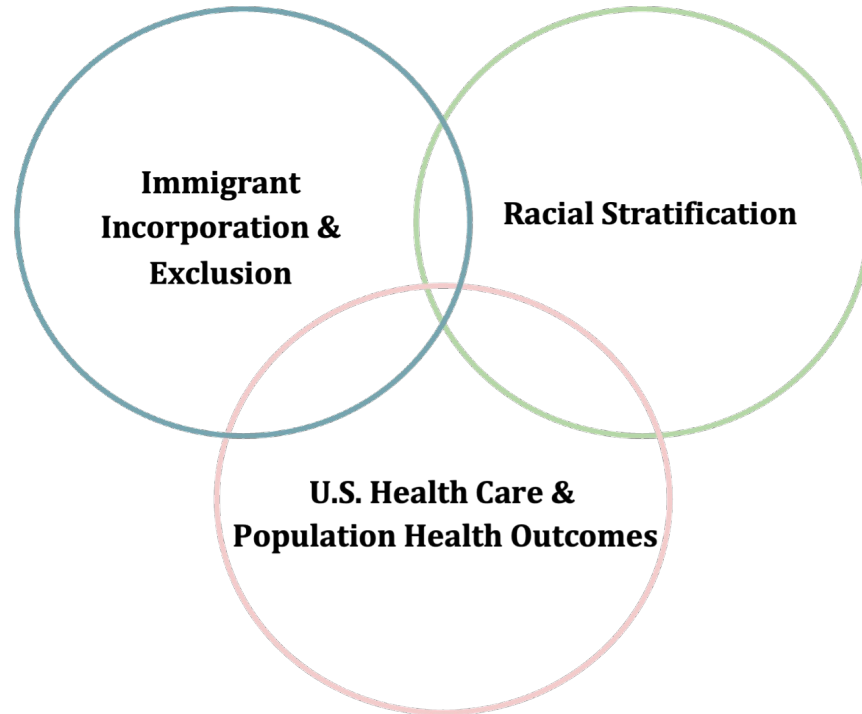
Rebecca Anna Schut, Ph.D.

Research Agenda

How does **systemic oppression** shape **policy environments** and **social institutions** in ways that generate **inequities** in health and well-being?

State Immigration Policy & Health/Well-Being

- Immigration policy: a **structural determinant** of health (Samari et al. 2021; Perreira and Pedroza 2019; Philbin et al. 2018; Castañeda et al. 2015)

  - Restrictive policies **negatively impact** immigrant well-being through perpetuating **legal violence** (Menjívar and Abrego 2012; Quiroga et al. 2014; Schut and Boen 2022)

    - *Direct pathways*: cardiovascular, metabolic, and mental health (via stress pathways) (e.g., Hatzenbuehler et al, 2017; Martinez et al. 2015)

    - *Indirect pathways*: access to social benefits (e.g., SNAP); transportation; financial resources; health care; safe working environments (e.g., Van Natta 2023; López-Sanders 2017)

I leverage **longitudinal**, **nationally-representative data** to explore state-level variation in health care use and health care barriers among **agricultural workers** by **legal status**, **nativity**, and **race/ethnicity**

DEMOGRAPHY

ISSUES   FEATURED

RESEARCH ARTICLE | DECEMBER 01 2022

State Immigration Policy Contexts and Racialized Legal Status Disparities in Health Care Utilization Among U.S. Agricultural Workers

Rebecca Anna Schut; Courtney Boen

Immigration Policy & U.S. Agricultural Workers

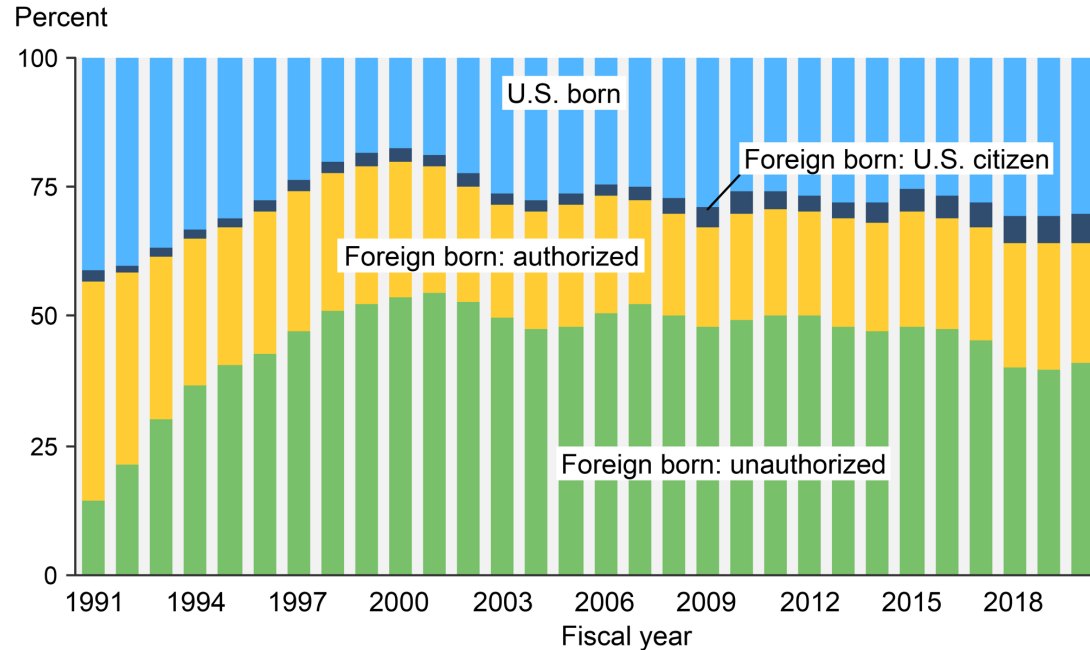
National Agricultural Workers Survey

+

Research Article

Immigrant legislation, across and within the United States

Gary Reich

Immigration Policy & U.S. Agricultural Workers

Legal status of hired crop farmworkers, fiscal 1991–2020

Percent

U.S. born

Foreign born: U.S. citizen

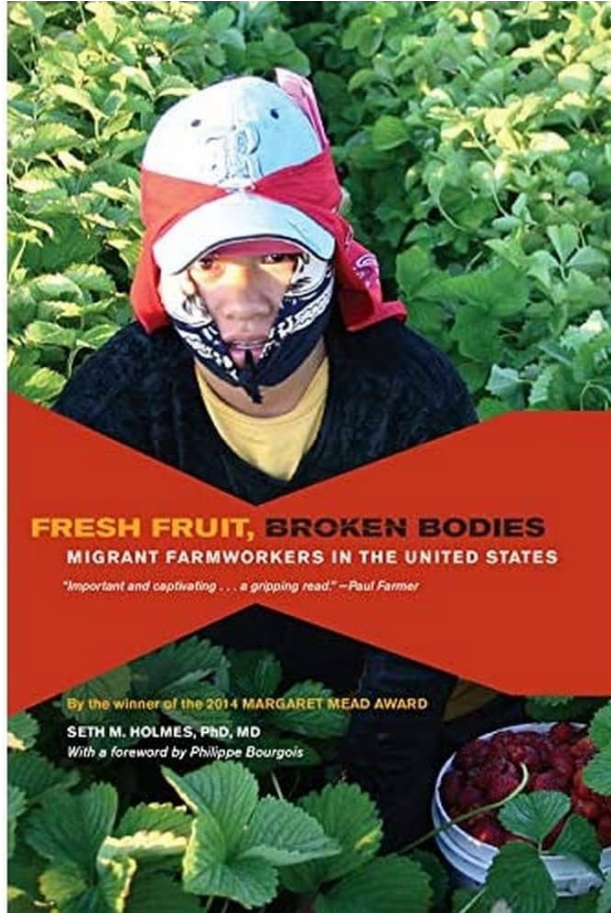Foreign born: authorized

Foreign born: unauthorized

Fiscal year

Note: Values for each year are 3-year moving averages to smooth fluctuations due to small sample sizes: e.g. data reported for fiscal 2020 are the average over fiscal 2018–20.
U.S. born includes those born in Puerto Rico.
Source: USDA, Economic Research Service using U.S. Department of Labor, National Agricultural Workers Survey.
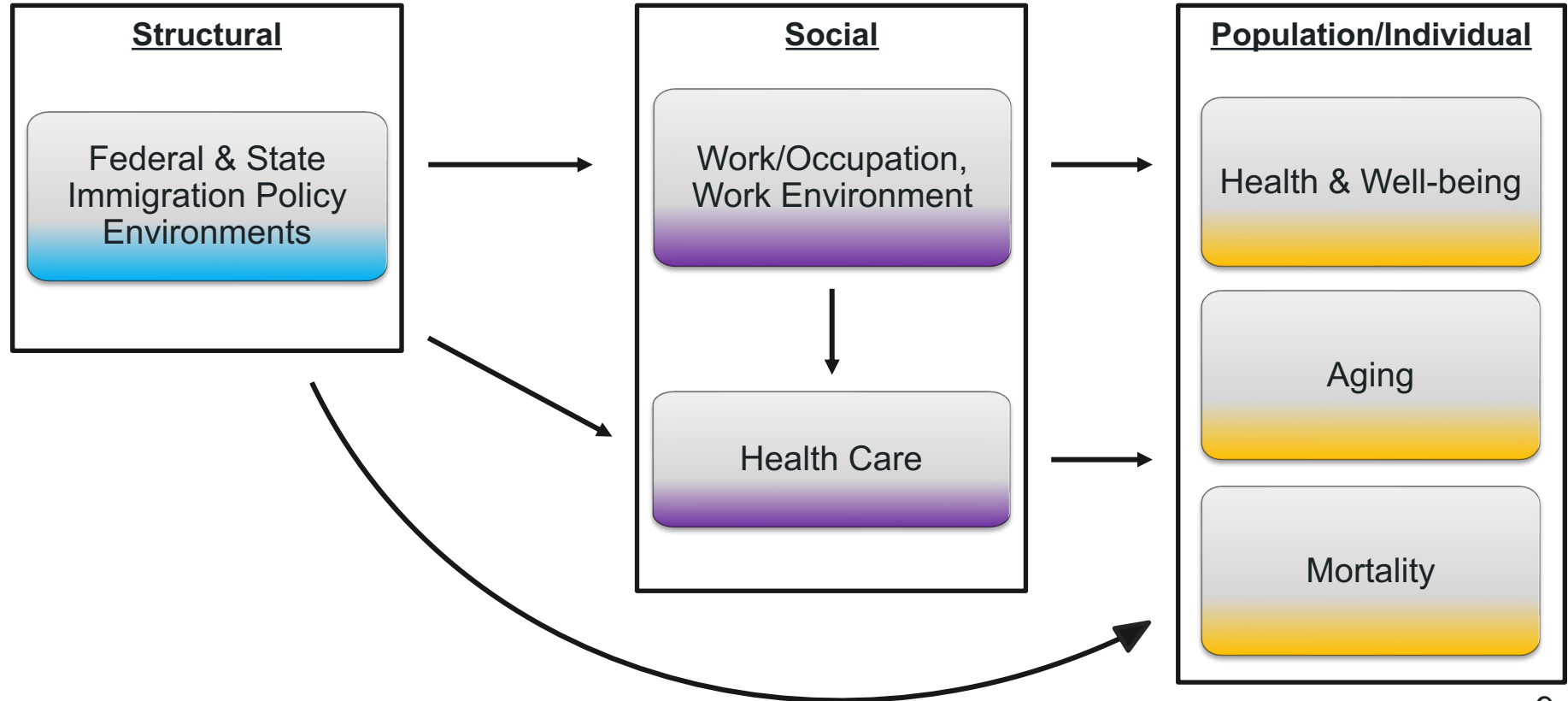
Immigration Policy & U.S. Agricultural Workers

Summary of Research Findings

- Restrictive state policy contexts **exacerbate** health care inequities among **naturalized U.S. citizen, non-White Latinx** workers

- Driver's license (accommodating) laws **improve** health care use among **U.S. born non-White Latinx** & **undocumented non-White Latinx workers**

- Reporting "no barriers" to care **decreases** in more restrictive contexts for most workers, including **U.S. born non-Latinx White workers**

Future Agenda: Immigration Policy, Work, & Health

Future Agenda: Immigration Policy, Work, & Health

Immigrants **across** the "skills" (i.e., educational) spectrum may experience employment precarity:

- Precarious employment (i.e., agriculture; food service; retail)
- Barriers to occ. attainment experienced by highly-educated immigrant workers

Employment precarity might be **magnified** by **restrictive policy contexts**

- Ability to find work (i.e., "receptiveness" of federal, state labor markets)
- Visa status (e.g., J; F; H-1B)
- Licensing requirements

…with negative consequences for **health/well-being**

- Access to health insurance and other resources (i.e., sick leave; finances)
- Safety of work environment (e.g., injury risk)
- Mental health, life satisfaction

Future Agenda: Immigration Policy, Work, & Health

<u>Immigration Policy & Worker Health across the Nativity, SES Spectrum</u>

Will Florida's immigration law spark a South Florida migrant worker exodus?

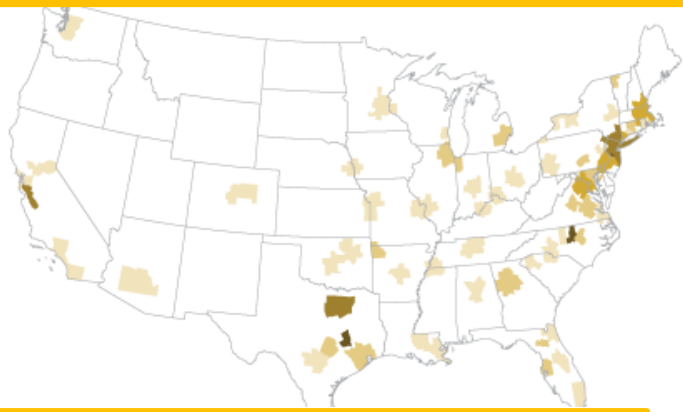WLRN 91.3 FM | By **Tim Padgett**

Published May 30, 2023 at 9:00 AM EDT

▶ **LISTEN · 1:16**

H-1B visa approvals concentrated in East Coast and Texas metro areas

H-1B visa approvals per 100 workers, fiscal 2010-2016

- 0–0.5
- 0.6–1.0
- 1.1–2.0
- 2.1–3.0
- ≥3.1

Integration & Physician Issues

Tennessee law lets international medical grads skip US residency

Ashleigh Hollowell (Twitter) - Tuesday, June 27th, 2023

♥ f ⅴ in ▶ ᴛT 🖶 ✉
Save Post Tweet Share Listen Text Size Print Email

Tennessee Gov. Bill Lee signed a law April 6, allowing international medical graduates to bypass U.S. residency training and enter into practice as a licensed physician. Now, nearly one year out from when the law will go into full effect, some are expressing hesitancy and others are looking forward to the change.

Challenges & Future Research "Wish List"

Data:
- Obtaining micro-data that include info on education, occupational attainment, demographics (legal status, nativity, race-ethnicity, etc.)

- *Policy data:*
  - Longitudinal, with variation across geographies/policy contexts
  - Include information on a wide array of policies

Solutions?
- More policy data collection vs./and policy data repository?
- Use of restricted data sources (e.g., FSRDC data)

Thank you!
schutr@uchicago.edu