

# Illegal Immigration and Crime in Texas

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# Illegal Immigrant Crime in Texas\*

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# 1 Introduction

Donald J. Trump launched his candidacy for the Republican presidential nomination in June 2015 by comments on illegal immigrants and the crime they commit in the United States. “When Mexico sends its people, they’re not sending their best. They’re not sending you. They’re not sending you,” he said. “They’re sending people that have lots of problems and they’re bringing those problems with us. They’re bringing drugs, they’re bringing crime, they’re rapists, and some, I assume, are good people.”<sup>1</sup> A few weeks after Trump’s announcement, 32-year-old Kate Steinle was shot and killed by an illegal immigrant José Inez García Zárate in San Francisco, California. Although Zárate was later acquitted of all murder and manslaughter charges due to mistakes made by the prosecutor, his shooting of Steinle seemed to support Trump’s worry about illegal immigrants causing a crime spree and helped win him the election in 2016.

As tragic as the shooting and death of Kate Steinle was, it was one of the 13,455 murders that year in the United States and it does not tell us how many of those victims were murdered by illegal immigrants.<sup>2</sup> The most important measure that matters when judging the crime rates of illegal immigrants is how likely they are to be criminals compared to other sub-populations. If illegal immigrants are more likely to be criminals than their presence in the United States would raise crime rates, supporting Trump’s assertions. But if illegal immigrants are less likely to commit crime then they would lower the nationwide crime rate.

Politically, this debate spills over to evaluating whether domestic immigration enforcement policies reduce crime. Illegal immigrant crime is also central to the debate over sanctuary jurisdictions that refuse to turn over many illegal immigrants to Immigration and Customs Enforcement, the effects of a border wall, and whether Border Patrol requires more resources to counter crime along the border. Answering whether illegal immigrants are particularly crime prone is essential to addressing these concerns and setting efficient anti-crime policies.

As important as this question is, there is little data available about illegal immigrant criminality to answer this question. Most state governments do not record the immigration

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1. Adam B. Lerner, *The 10 Best Lines from Donald Trump’s Announcement Speech*, June 2015, <https://www.politico.com/story/2015/06/donald-trump-2016-announcement-10-best-lines-119066>.

2. Federal Bureau of Investigation, *Expanded Homicide Data Table 1: Murder Victims by Race, Ethnicity, and Sex, 2015*, Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Program. Accessed April 9, 2020, [https://ucr.fbi.gov/crime-in-the-u.s/2015/crime-in-the-u.s.-2015/tables/expanded\\_homicide\\_data\\_table\\_1\\_murder\\_victims\\_by\\_race\\_ethnicity\\_and\\_sex\\_2015.xls](https://ucr.fbi.gov/crime-in-the-u.s/2015/crime-in-the-u.s.-2015/tables/expanded_homicide_data_table_1_murder_victims_by_race_ethnicity_and_sex_2015.xls).

statuses of those who are convicted of crimes and federal census data on the incarcerated population do not identify illegal immigrants. However, the little evidence that does exist shows that illegal immigrants have a crime rate far below that of native-born Americans, but higher than legal immigrants. This chapter will present the two most important pieces of evidence. The first compelling set of evidence is the relative conviction and arrest rates in the state of Texas, which keeps arrest and conviction data for the number of illegal immigrants by crime. The second is the estimates of the nationwide incarceration rates by immigration status, which are consistent with the Texas conviction rates.

## 2 Illegal Immigration and Crime in Texas<sup>3</sup>

Texas is the only state that records criminal convictions and arrests by immigration status.<sup>4</sup> The Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS) has these data because its law enforcement agencies cooperate with federal immigration enforcement authorities at the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) by checking the biometric information of all arrestees in the state and tracking them through to their convictions.<sup>5</sup> Unlike other states, the Texas DPS keeps the results of these DHS checks and we acquired them through a Public Information Act request.<sup>6</sup>

The Texas DPS data quality is excellent and, if it errs, it is likely to overcount the convictions and arrests of illegal immigrants because it counts more total arrests than the other publicly available DPS source.<sup>7</sup> It's particularly fortuitous that Texas keeps these data because it borders Mexico, it has the second-largest illegal immigrant population of any state, it is a politically conservative state governed by Republicans, in 2017 it did not have jurisdictions that limited its cooperation with federal immigration enforcement, and it has a law-and-order reputation for severely and strictly enforcing its criminal laws.<sup>8</sup>

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3. Much of the research and the methods from this section comes from these briefs: Alex Nowrasteh, *Criminal Immigrants in Texas in 2017: Illegal Immigrant Conviction Rates and Arrest Rates for Homicide, Sex Crimes, Larceny, and Other Crimes*, Cato Institute Immigration Research and Policy Brief, no. 13, August 27, 2019, August 2019, [https://www.cato.org/sites/cato.org/files/pubs/pdf/irpb13\\_edit.pdf](https://www.cato.org/sites/cato.org/files/pubs/pdf/irpb13_edit.pdf); Alex Nowrasteh, *Criminal Immigrants in Texas: Illegal Immigrant Conviction and Arrest Rates for Homicide, Sex Crimes, Larceny, and Other Crimes*, Cato Institute Immigration Research and Policy Brief, no. 4, February 26, 2018, February 2018, <https://www.cato.org/sites/cato.org/files/pubs/pdf/irpb-4-updated.pdf>.

4. Nowrasteh, *Criminal Immigrants in Texas in 2017: Illegal Immigrant Conviction Rates and Arrest Rates for Homicide, Sex Crimes, Larceny, and Other Crimes*.

5. *Ibid.*

6. "Public Information Act," Texas Department of Public Safety; "Texas Criminal Illegal Alien Data," Texas Department of Public Safety. These data sets are available by email request to Alex Nowrasteh at [anowrasteh@cato.org](mailto:anowrasteh@cato.org)

7. Nowrasteh, *Criminal Immigrants in Texas in 2017: Illegal Immigrant Conviction Rates and Arrest Rates for Homicide, Sex Crimes, Larceny, and Other Crimes*.

8. *Ibid.*

Controlling for the size of the population is essential to comparing relative conviction and arrest rates between sub-populations in the state of Texas. This means that the total number of native-born Americans, legal immigrants, and illegal immigrants living in Texas is just as important as the number of convictions in calculating their respective crime rates. However, the government doesn't record immigration status in the American Community Survey (ACS), so social scientists estimate the number of illegal and legal immigrants using the residual method. We adopt a residual method proposed by Christian Gunadi in a paper published in *Oxford Economic Papers*.<sup>9</sup>

Gunadi imputed legal immigrant status and identified those left over as illegal immigrants, which is different from other residual methods that identify illegal immigrants first and then count the left-over people as legal immigrants. Using Gunadi's methods, a person is counted as a legal immigrants if he or she met any of the following criteria as recorded in the 2018 ACS: the immigrant arrived after 1980; is a U.S. citizen; received welfare benefits such as Social Security, Supplemental Security Income, Medicaid, Medicare, or military insurance; served in the Armed Forces; works for the government; resided in public housing or received rental subsidies or was the spouse of someone who resided in public housing or received rental subsidies; or was born in Cuba and has a spouse who is a legal immigrant or U.S. citizen. Gunadi also considers occupational licenses, but the method used here drops that filter because so many states issue licenses to illegal immigrants.<sup>10</sup> The number of legal immigrants estimated from this method includes those residing in Texas on temporary non-immigrant work visas and those who have naturalized and earned American citizenship.

There were 28,701,845 people living in Texas in 2018. According to the results of the Gunadi residual method (minus the questions on occupational licensure), there were 23,767,658 native-born American, 3,077,766 legal immigrants, and 1,856,421 illegal immigrants living in Texas. They represented 82.8 percent of the population, 10.7 percent, and 6.5 percent, respectively. Likewise, there were 337,996 criminal convictions of native-born Americans in Texas that year, 16,470 convictions of legal immigrants, and 14,526 convictions of illegal immigrants.

Figure 1 shows that the illegal immigrant criminal conviction rate was 782 per 100,000 illegal immigrants, 535 per 100,000 legal immigrants, and 1,422 per 100,000 native-born Ameri-

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9. Christian Gunadi, *On the Association Between Undocumented Immigration and Crime in the United States*, *Oxford Economic Papers*, September 2019,

10. Michelangelo Landgrave and Alex Nowrasteh, *Illegal Immigrant Incarceration Rates, 2010–2018: Demographics and Policy Implications*, Policy Analysis No. 890, Cato Institute, Washington, DC, April 21, April 2020.

cans in Texas in 2018. The illegal immigrant criminal conviction rate was 45 percent below that of native-born Americans in Texas. The legal immigrant criminal conviction rate was 62 percent below that of native-born Americans. Figure 1 shows the rates for the number of convictions and not the number of individuals convicted. The conviction rates for individuals are slightly lower for every group than the rate of the number of convictions, but the ratio is roughly the same with illegal immigrants at 743, legal immigrants at 495, and native-born Americans at 1,304 per 100,000 of their respective subpopulations.

[INSERT FIGURE 1 ABOUT HERE]

That pattern also holds for other more serious crimes like homicide, the most serious criminal offense. In Texas, there were 867 convictions for homicide in 2018. Of those, native-born American were convicted 780 times, illegal immigrants 46 times, and legal immigrants 41 times. Figure 2 shows that the illegal immigrant homicide conviction rate was 2.5 per 100,000 illegal immigrants, 1.3 per 100,000 legal immigrants, and 3.3 per 100,000 native-born Americans in Texas in 2018. Thus, illegal immigrants had a homicide conviction rate 25 percent below that of native-born Americans in Texas. The legal immigrant homicide conviction rate was 59 percent below that of native-born Americans. Once again, native-born Americans were the most likely to be convicted followed by illegal immigrants with legal immigrants as the least-likely to be convicted of homicide.

[INSERT FIGURE 2 ABOUT HERE]

The illegal immigrant conviction rate for all violent crime is about 38 percent below that of native-born Americans and the legal immigrant conviction rate is about 65 percent below (Figure 3). Illegal and legal immigrants are substantially less likely to be convicted of property crimes than native-born Americans. Illegal immigrants have a conviction rate 74 percent below that of native-born Americans for property crimes while it is 71 percent below for legal immigrants (Figure 4). The low illegal immigrant property crime rate can probably be explained by their high rate of employment, especially among men, relative to both legal immigrant and native-born Americans men.<sup>11</sup> In other words, the opportunity cost for property crimes is higher for illegal immigrant men because they are more likely to be gainfully employed.

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11. George J. Borjas, [The Labor Supply of Undocumented Immigrants](#), *Labour Economics* 46 (June 2017): 1–13.

[INSERT FIGURE 3 ABOUT HERE]

[INSERT FIGURE 4 ABOUT HERE]

The illegal immigrant sex crime conviction rate, which includes sexual assault and other sexual offenses, is the closest to native-born Americans. Figure 5 shows that the illegal immigrant conviction rate for sex crimes is 24.4 per 100,000 illegal immigrants, which is only 3 percent below the sex crime conviction rate for native-born Americans at 25.1 per 100,000 natives. Legal immigrants have the lowest sex crime conviction rate at 14.7 per 100,000 legal immigrants, more than 58 percent below that of native-born Americans.

[INSERT FIGURE 5 ABOUT HERE]

The results for arrests are similar. Texas police made 907,767 criminal arrests in 2018. Legal immigrants accounted for 5.3 percent of all those arrested and illegal immigrants accounted for 4.4 percent, well below their respective 10.7 and 6.5 percent shares of the population. For all arrests in Texas, there were about 2,142 arrests of illegal immigrants for every 100,000 illegal immigrants in the state compared to 1,570 for legal immigrants and 3,449 for native-born Americans. By comparison, the illegal immigrant arrest rate was 38 percent below that of native-born Americans and the legal immigrant arrest rate was 55 percent below (Figure 6).

For every conviction of an illegal immigrant, there were 2.7 arrests compared to 2.9 arrests for every conviction of a legal immigrant and 2.4 arrests for every conviction of a native-born American. Looking at the number of individuals arrested relative to the number of individuals convicted reveals a similar pattern of 2.7 illegal immigrants arrested for every conviction, 2.8 legal immigrants arrested for every conviction, and 2.3 native-born Americans arrested for every conviction (Figure 7). Thus, illegal and legal immigrants who are arrested are less likely to be convicted than native-born Americans.

[INSERT FIGURE 6 ABOUT HERE]

[INSERT FIGURE 7 ABOUT HERE]

There are several potential explanations for this. First, police could have a bias against legal and illegal immigrants, but the rest of the justice system does not and is less likely not

to pursue further legal action that would lead to a conviction. Second, immigrants could have better legal representation. Third, many illegal immigrants arrested by the police are deported before they can be convicted. However, that doesn't account for the even higher ratio for legal immigrants who must be convicted in order to be removed. Fourth, immigrants could be more likely to be arrested but also more likely to skip bail and not be convicted. The last possibility is the most serious. After all, about 65 percent of illegal immigrants in Texas are from Mexico so it would be relatively cheap for those released on bail to escape.

However, all Texas police jurisdictions in 2018 cooperate with federal immigration authorities and they are supposed to turn over arrested or convicted illegal immigrants to federal law enforcement for deportation.<sup>12</sup> In 2018, Texas police arrested 36,970 illegal immigrants and they turned over 34,949 illegal immigrants to Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) for eventual deportation.<sup>13</sup> The small difference between those arrested and those turned over to ICE, the latter which also includes illegal immigrants being released from state prison, does not allow much leakage. There simply cannot be many illegal immigrants who are arrested who then escape or who are deported without being convicted.

Arrest rates for specific crimes are closely related to the conviction rates. The illegal immigrant homicide arrest rate is 28.8 percent below that of native-born Americans. The legal immigrant homicide arrest rate is 61.2 percent below that of native-born Americans (Figure 8). The illegal immigrant property and violent crime arrest rates are uniformly below those of native-born Americans (Figure 9). The illegal immigrant violent crime arrest rate is slightly higher than for legal immigrants, but the illegal immigrant property crime arrest rate is lower than it is from legal immigrants. The sex crime arrest rate for illegal immigrants is 24 percent below that of native-born Americans and 47 percent below that of legal immigrants (Figure 10).

[INSERT FIGURE 8 ABOUT HERE]

[INSERT FIGURE 9 ABOUT HERE]

[INSERT FIGURE 10 ABOUT HERE]

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12. Bryan Griffith and Jessica M. Vaughan, *Map 1: Sanctuary Cities, Countries, and States*, Center for Immigration Studies. Updated March 23, 2020, <https://cis.org/Map-Sanctuary-Cities-Countries-and-States>.

13. TRAC Immigration, *Latest Data: Immigration and Customs Enforcement Detainers*, Syracuse University. Accessed April 9, 2020, <https://trac.syr.edu/phptools/immigration/detain/>.



The criminal conviction and arrest rates above are not historical aberrations and the year 2018 was not cherry-picked to show positive results. For every year for which full data are available and there are enough ACS data to use Gunadi’s residual method to estimate the number of illegal immigrants residing in Texas, they have a lower criminal conviction rate (Figure 11). From 2012 through the end of 2018, illegal immigrants in Texas had an average criminal conviction rate 42 percent below that of native-born Americans. Legal immigrants had a criminal conviction rate 63 percent below that of native-born Americans during the same period. Arrest rates are also lower for illegal immigrants during the entire period, but lowest of all for legal immigrants (Figure 12). On average from 2012 through 2018, illegal immigrants in Texas were 40 percent less likely to be arrested than native-born Americans and legal immigrants were 55 percent less likely.

[INSERT FIGURE 11 ABOUT HERE]

[INSERT FIGURE 12 ABOUT HERE]

By country of origin, Mexicans comprise the largest group of illegal immigrants in Texas in 2018 at 65 percent. According to Texas DPS data on the nationality of illegal immigrants by country of origin, Mexicans are 65 percent of those convicted of crimes in 2018 — exactly proportional to their share of the population. Unfortunately, the Gunadi method is not robust enough to identify countries of origin for other illegal immigrant populations in Texas as they are too small.

### **3 Texas Crime Elasticities by County**

Illegal immigrant criminal conviction and arrest rates are low throughout the state of Texas, but there could be substantial local variation whereby illegal immigrant crime is higher in counties where many illegal immigrants reside. Thus, this section examines how a change in the illegal immigrant population affects crime on the county level in Texas for the years 2012-2018. The relationship between changes in the illegal immigrant population and crime is known as an elasticity.

The elasticity between two variables estimates how one variable, the illegal immigrant population here, affects another variable like the number of illegal immigrant convictions. For

good measure, we also sought to compare the relationship between the illegal immigrant population on the county level and overall index crimes (murder, rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, larceny, and motor vehicle theft) as collected by the Texas DPS.<sup>14</sup> We also included a control for the number of law enforcement officers per capita. The results of these regressions are merely correlative and not causal, but it’s reasonable to assume a relationship between the number of crimes committed by illegal immigrants, crimes overall, and the illegal immigrant population for the purposes of these regressions.<sup>15</sup>

We find no statistically significant relationship between an increase in a county’s illegal immigrant population and the number of illegal immigrant convictions and the overall number of convictions with one exception (Figure 13). For each regression in Table 13, we find statistically insignificant negative point estimates showing that a 10 percent increase in Texas counties’ population share of illegal immigrants is correlated with decreases of 0.07 percent for all convictions and 0.05 percent for convictions of illegal immigrants. In each model, the only significant predictor of conviction rates is county population, which suggests that the total population of a county is a more important predictor of criminal convictions than the share of illegal immigrant. Surprise, more people means more crime.

[INSERT FIGURE 13 HERE]

Figure 13 also breaks down the conviction rates into three subcomponents: murder, all violent crime, and all property crime. The only statistically significant relationship, which is the exception mentioned above, is a negative association between total violent crime convictions and the illegal immigrant share with a point estimate of -0.104 that is significant at the 5 percent level. This exception suggests that a 10 percent increase in the illegal immigrants share of the population is associated with a 1 percent decline in violent crime convictions in our sample of Texas counties.

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14. Texas Department of Public Safety answer to Nowrasteh’s public information act request.

15. To empirically test the correlation between illegal immigrant conviction rates and the illegal immigrant population, we run the simple regression:

$$\ln(Y_{it}) = \mu + \alpha_i + \lambda_t + \gamma \ln(Illegal_{it}) + \eta \ln(Population_{it}) + \beta \ln(PoliceRate_{it-1}) + \varepsilon_{it}, \quad (1)$$

where  $Y_{it}$  is the number of convictions in county  $i$  in year  $t$ .  $Illegal_{it}$  represents the estimated illegal population and  $Population_{it}$  is the total county population from the ACS.  $\alpha_i$  and  $\lambda_t$  denote county and year fixed effects, respectively. In line with the economics and criminology literature we also control for the number of police officers per 100 population. Our coefficient of interest  $\gamma$  represents the estimated elasticity of the conviction rate with respect to the county population share of illegal immigrants. Since we are limited to 38 identified counties in the raw ACS microdata, we compute wild cluster bootstrap test statistics as described in Cameron, Gelbach, and Miller (2008).

One of our concerns with the regressions in Table 13 is that they are based on the illegal immigrant share of the population in just 38 identified Texas counties.<sup>16</sup> We followed the same Gunadi methods mentioned earlier in this chapter, including the exception for licensing, to estimate the number of illegal immigrants — but the method only works when there is a large population in the counties. Texas has 254 counties, so the 38 for which we can apply Gunadi’s methods does give us some pause, but those counties also include most of Texas’ population. Because of the small number of counties, we compute wild cluster bootstrap test statistics instead of normal standard errors.<sup>17</sup>

Taken together, these results suggest that higher illegal immigrant population shares have little to no relationship with illegal immigrant criminal conviction rates or overall index crime rates. The only exception is that illegal immigrant shares of the population correlate negatively with violent crime convictions in Texas counties from 2012-2018. While these regressions are purely descriptive in nature, they are consistent with the other findings of illegal immigrant criminality in Texas.

Even on the margin, for small changes in the illegal immigrant population in a local area, there is no statistically significant effect of the illegal immigrant population on the rate of criminal convictions, either overall or for illegal immigrants specifically.

## 4 Nationwide Illegal Immigrant Conviction Rates

Texas is the only state that records convictions and arrests by immigration status, but most Americans live in other states. It’s tempting to take the results from Texas and apply them to the rest of the country to come to a nationwide conclusion, but one should be cautious in doing that directly. However, there is evidence that the relationship between illegal immigration and crime in Texas holds nationwide and that evidence comes from applying Gunadi’s method to another dataset in the American Community Survey (ACS).

The ACS surveys those incarcerated in correctional facilities to such an extent that it is possible to apply Gunadi’s residual method to estimating how many nationwide prisoners are illegal immigrants. The nationwide number includes those in state and federal prisons,

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16. Steven Ruggles et al., *U.S. Census Data for Social, Economic, and Health Research*, IPUMS USA. Accessed April 10, 2020.

17. A. Colin Cameron, Jonah B. Gelbach, and Douglass L. Miller, *Bootstrap-Based Improvements for Inference with Clustered Errors*, *Review of Economics and Statistics* 90, no. 3 (August 2008): 414–27.

institutions that house very different types of criminals. State prisons house over 87 percent of all prisoners in the United States in 2016 and they are incarcerated mostly for violent and property offenses.<sup>18</sup> Federal prisoners, on the other hand, account for less than 13 percent of all prisoners and are not representative as federal crimes include immigration offenses and other non-state crimes.

ACS inmate responses to questions are reliable as they are ordinarily collected by or under the supervision of correctional institution administrators, so there's no reason to suspect systematic lying on the part of prisoners.<sup>19</sup> Prison staff oversee the interviews and prisoner information from prison records themselves are the basis for much of the information in the ACS, so the data are trustworthy.

Before applying Gunadi's method to the population incarcerated in adult correctional facilities, the first step is to identify those prisoners in the ACS. This requires isolating the prisoners from the rest of the so-called group quarters population in the ACS as they are all lumped together. Group quarters include all group living arrangements such as retirement homes, orphanages, student dorms, mental health institutions, and prisons. Narrowing down that population by age through identifying only those in the 18-54 age range is the most important step as people outside of that range are more likely to be in retirement homes or mental health institutions, respectively. Estimating the population incarcerated in correctional facilities adds ambiguity, but the ACS also releases macro demographic snapshots of inmates in correctional facilities which return total numbers that are very close to those produced by Gunadi's residual method applied to the 18-54 aged population in adult correctional facilities.<sup>20</sup> Although not perfect, applying Gunadi's method to the 18-54 age groups in the ACS group quarters population is reasonable given the data limitations.

Under this method, there are an estimated 1,933,039 native-born Americans, 83,698 illegal immigrants, and 71,472 legal immigrants incarcerated in the United States in 2018. The incarceration rate for native-born Americans was 1,477 per 100,000; 877 per 100,000 for illegal immigrants; and 380 per 100,000 for legal immigrants in 2018 (Figure 14). Illegal immigrants are 41 percent less likely to be incarcerated than native-born Americans. Legal immigrants

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18. E. Ann Carson and Joseph Mulako-Wangota, *Corrections Statistical Analysis Tool (CSAT) – Prisoners*, Bureau of Justice Statistics. Accessed April 10, 2020, <https://www.bjs.gov/index.cfm?ty=nps>.

19. Landgrave and Nowrasteh, *Illegal Immigrant Incarceration Rates, 2010–2018: Demographics and Policy Implications*.

20. American Community Survey, *Characteristics of the Group Quarters Population by Group Quarters Type (3 Types)*, 2018, <https://data.census.gov/cedsci/table?q=S2602&tid=ACSST1Y2018.S2602&vintage=2018&hidePreview=true>.

are 74 percent less likely to be incarcerated than natives. As Figure 14 shows, the relative incarceration rates for 2018 are very similar since 2012.

[INSERT FIGURE 14 ABOUT HERE]

The nationwide incarceration rate in Figure 14 is a different measure of criminality than the conviction rate in Figure 11, but they should be correlated over time if two things are true. The illegal immigrant criminal conviction rate in Texas is very similar to the estimated illegal immigrant incarceration rate nationwide. Although data are only available for 2012-2018, the correlation coefficient is 0.99, which suggests that the nationwide incarceration estimates for illegal immigrants in Figure 14 are very close to their actual incarceration rates.

## 5 Conclusion

Whether one focuses on criminal convictions, arrests, or the number of individuals convicted or arrested, the results are the same: illegal immigrants have a lower crime rate than native-born Americans in Texas. Legal immigrants have the lowest rates of all, except for some measures of property crime where illegal immigrants are even less crime prone. Native-born Americans living in Texas have the highest criminal conviction and arrest rates in all of the figures above. Even on the margin, there is no statistically significant effect of the illegal immigrant population on the rate of criminal convictions, either overall or for illegal immigrants specifically.

Crime, at least in the state of Texas, is a domestically produced problem and not an imported one. Texas is one of the states where we would expect higher illegal immigrant crime rates if they were an especially crime prone subpopulation. Texas' proximity to Mexico, the reputation of its criminal justice system, and the state-level politics all militate toward increasing the illegal immigrant crime rate relative to legal immigrants and native-born Americans.

The low illegal immigrant conviction and arrest rates in Texas suggest that illegal immigrants have a lower rate in other states and across the entire country. Nationwide estimates of the illegal immigrant incarceration rate are very closely correlated to the Texas illegal immigrant criminal conviction rate.

The government is entrusted with an enormous amount of power to protect the lives, liberties, and property of people living in the United States. American residents and citizens are less free when policy makers have poor information about security threats because they react inefficiently. As a result, some threats loom larger than they should and others don't loom large enough. Better and more accurate information can help policymakers judge threats accurately and respond appropriately. Thus, accurate information can free policy makers from making inefficient choices and liberate taxpayers, citizens, and residents from shouldering the burden of inappropriate government policy. Illegal immigration is a serious public policy problem in the United States, but it is not a problem because it increases the crime rate.

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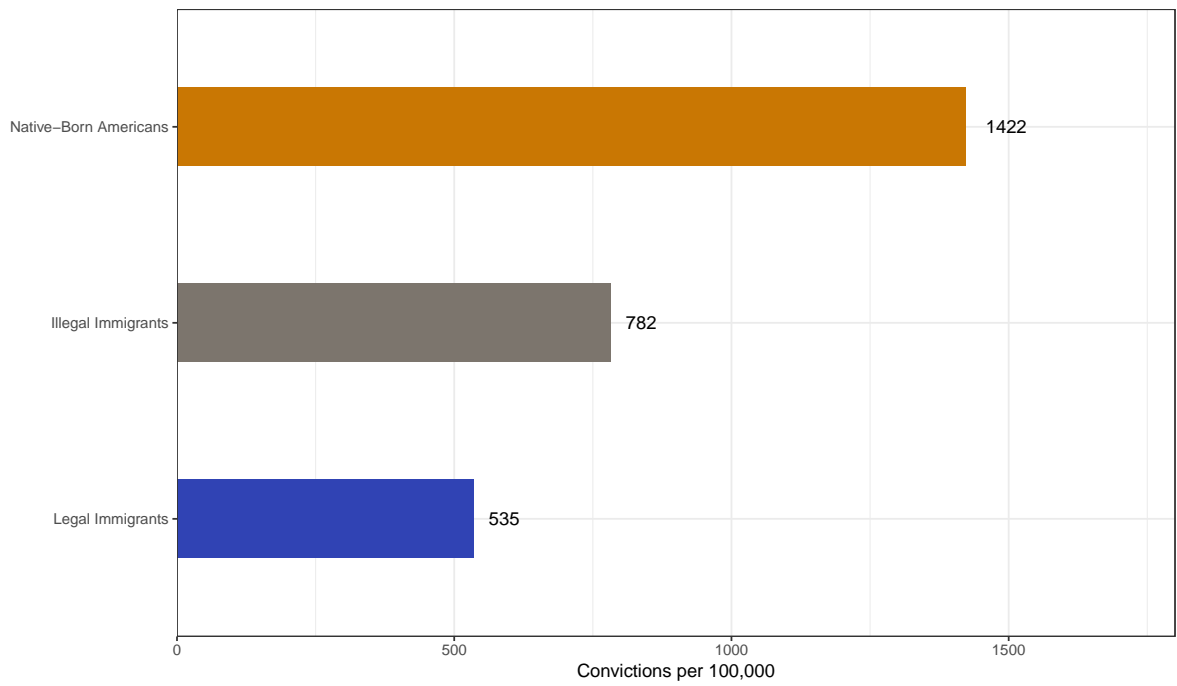
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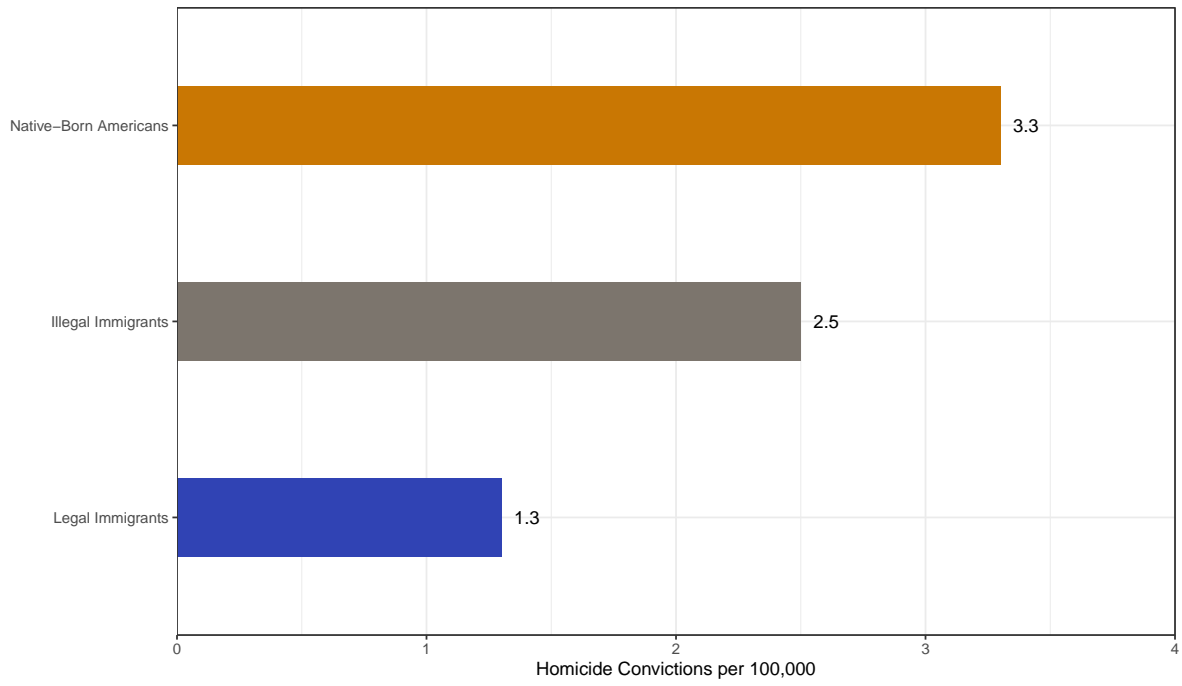


# Figures

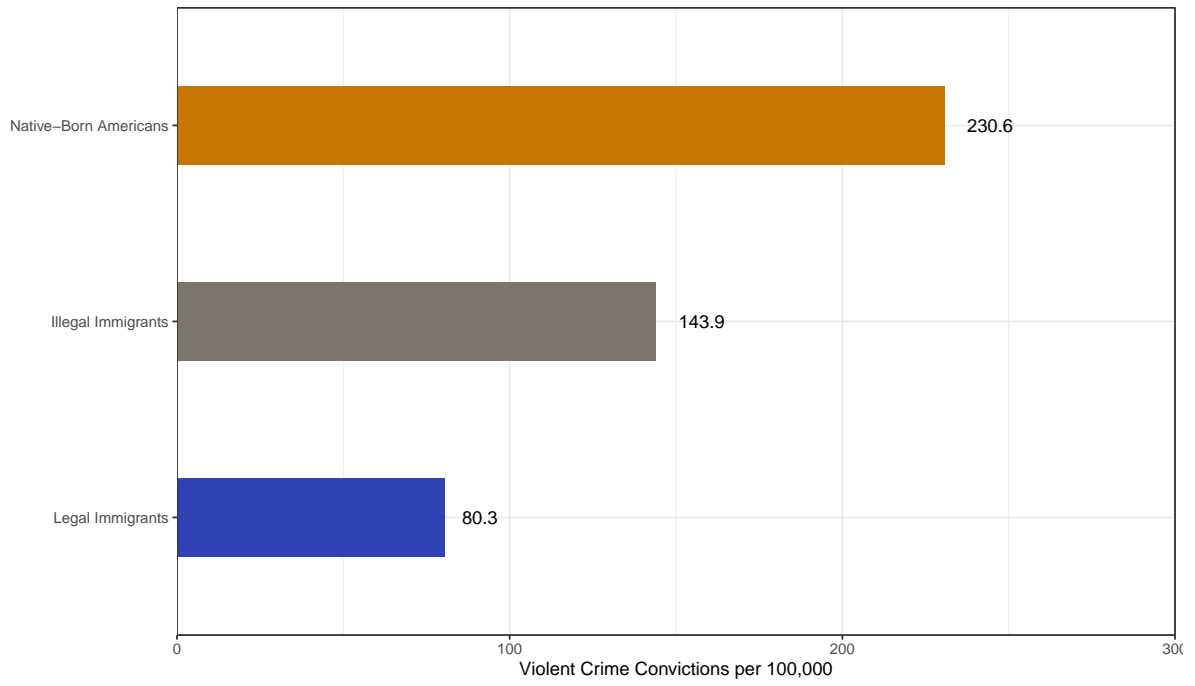
Figure 1. Texas Conviction Rate



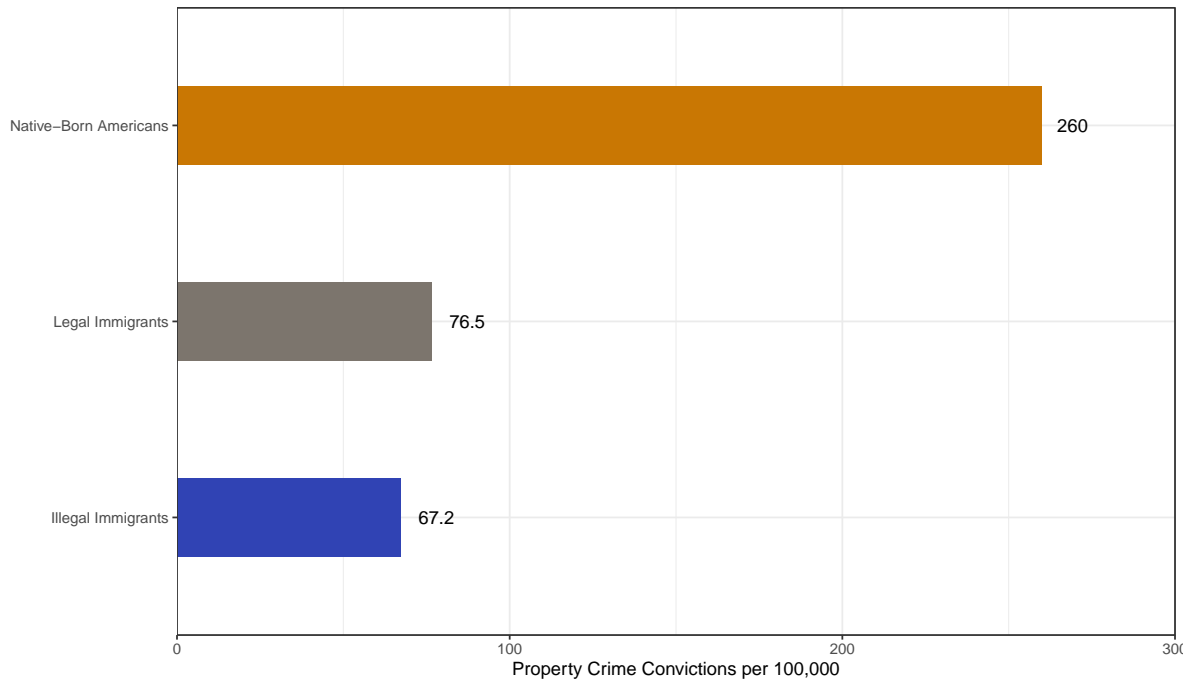
**Figure 2. Texas Homicide Conviction Rate**



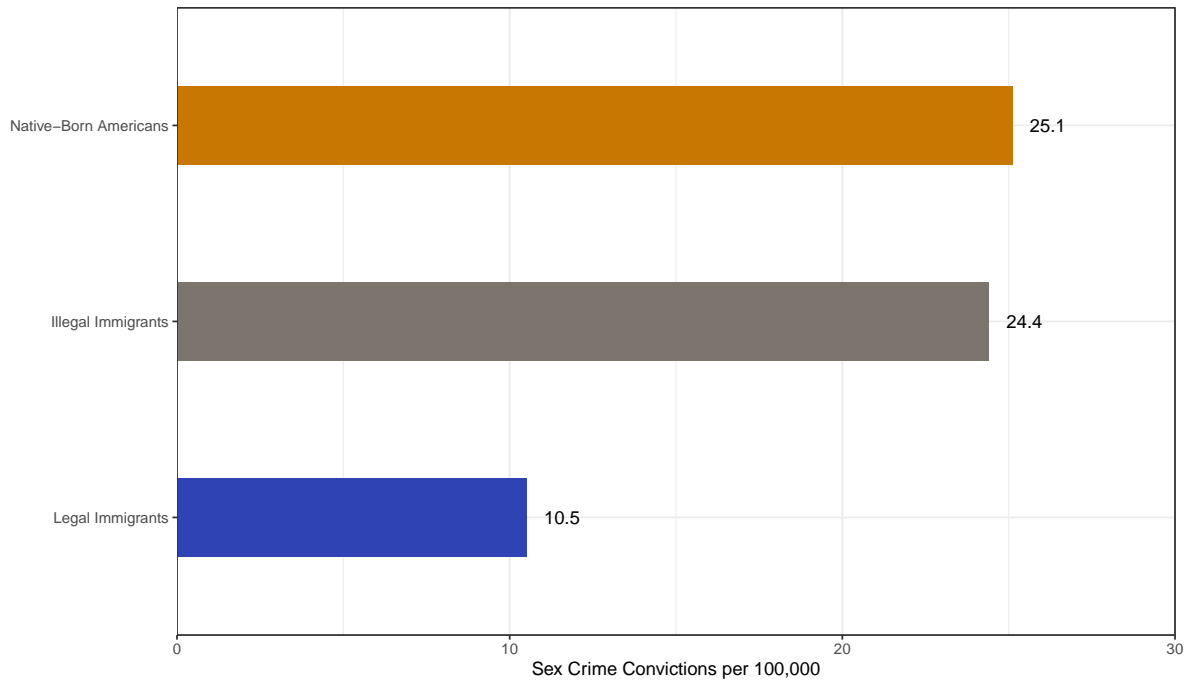
**Figure 3. Texas Violent Crime Conviction Rate**



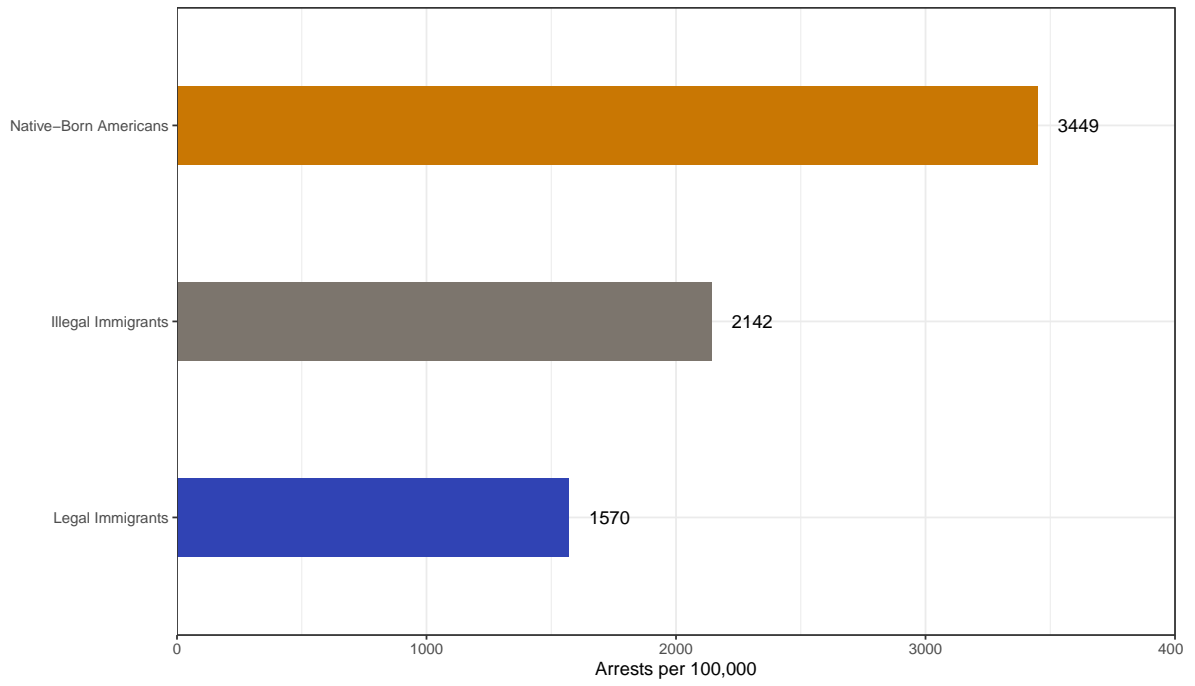
**Figure 4. Texas Property Crime Conviction Rate**



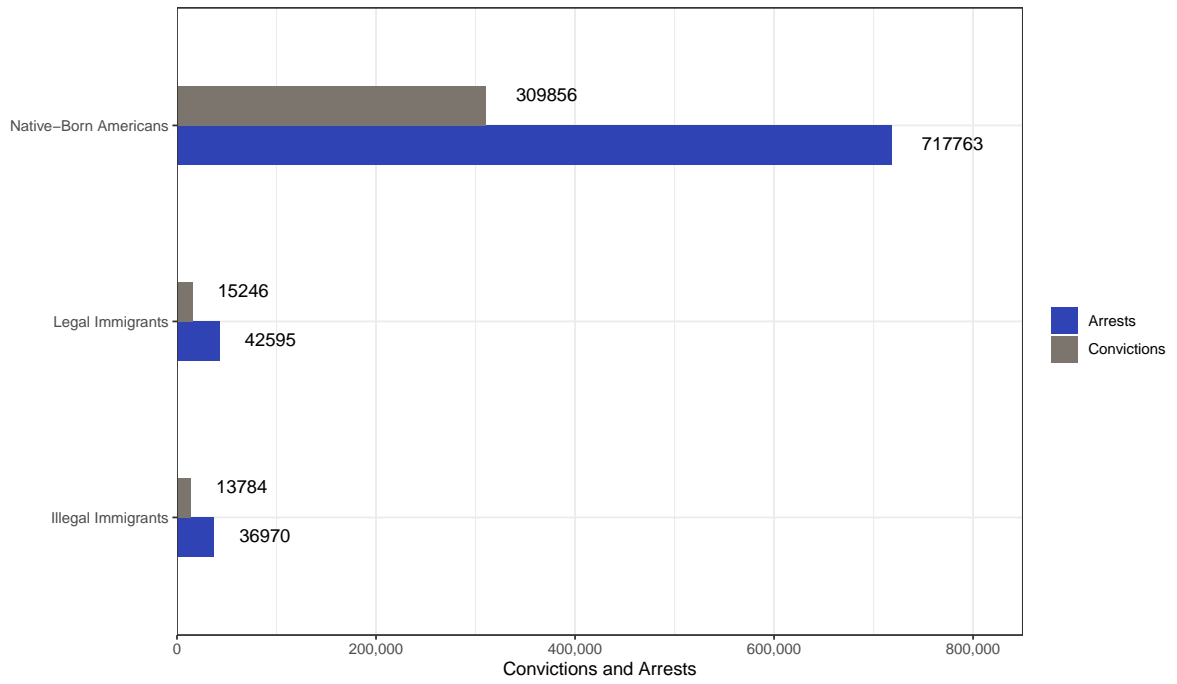
**Figure 5. Texas Sex Crime Conviction Rate**



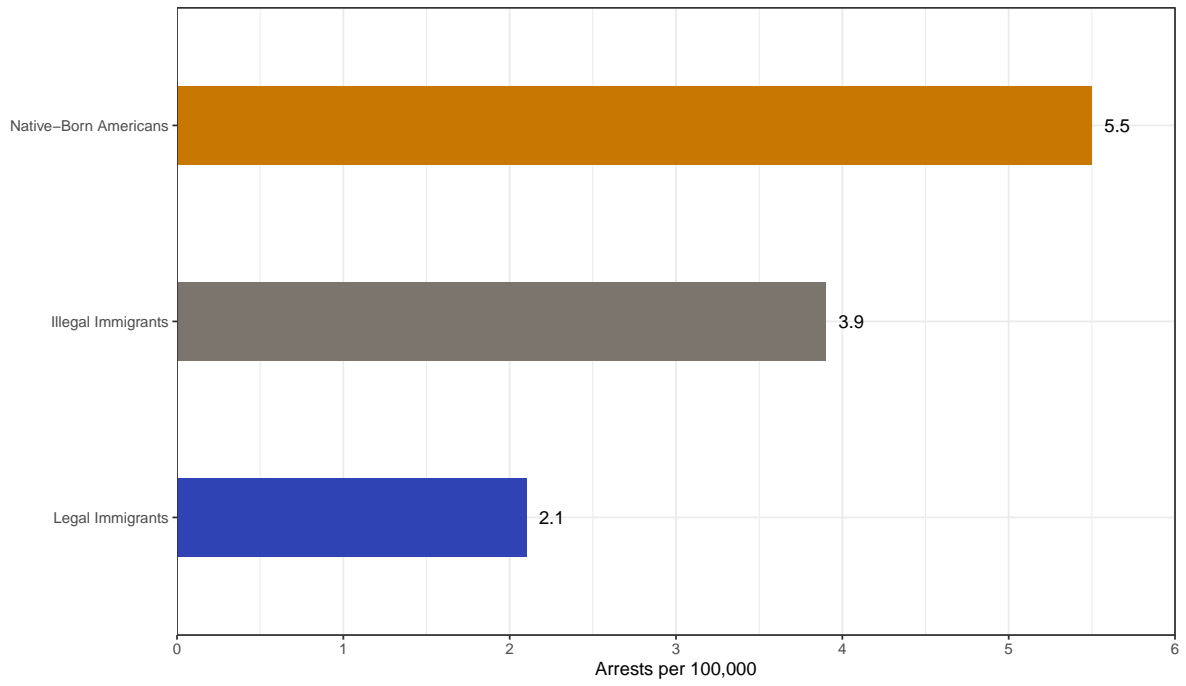
**Figure 6. Texas Arrest Rate**



**Figure 7. Texas Individuals Convicted and Arrested by Immigration Status**

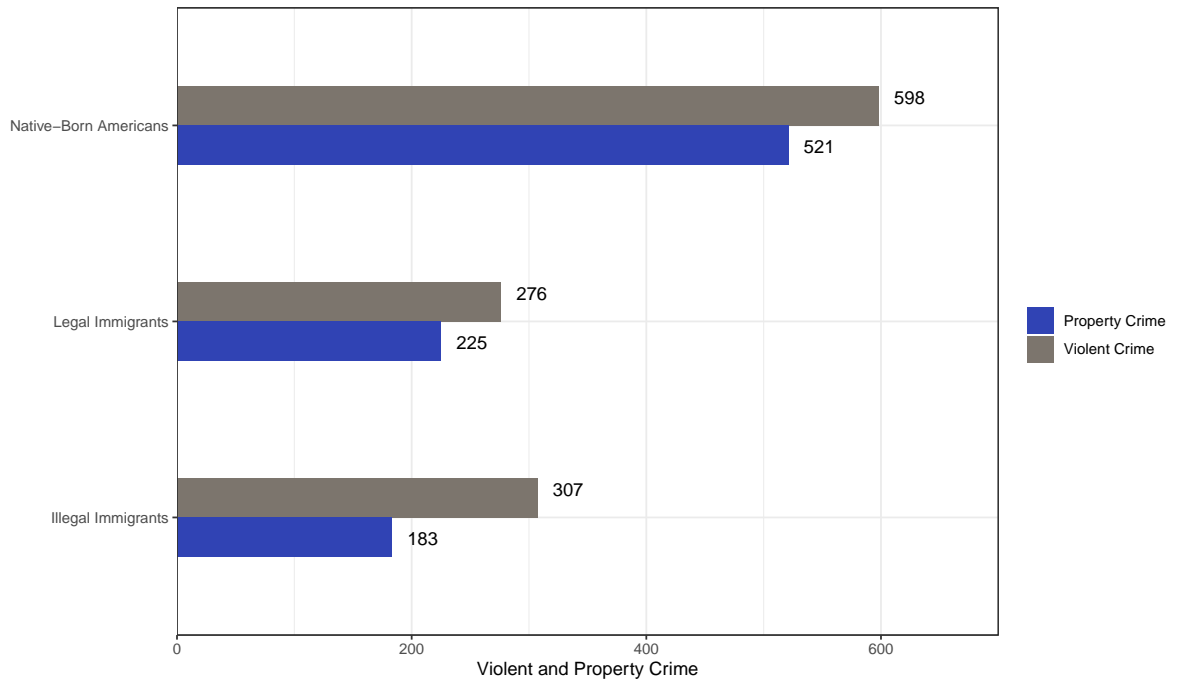


**Figure 8. Texas Homicide Arrest Rate**





**Figure 9. Texas Violent and Property Crime Arrest Rate**



**Figure 10. Texas Sex Crime Arrest Rate**

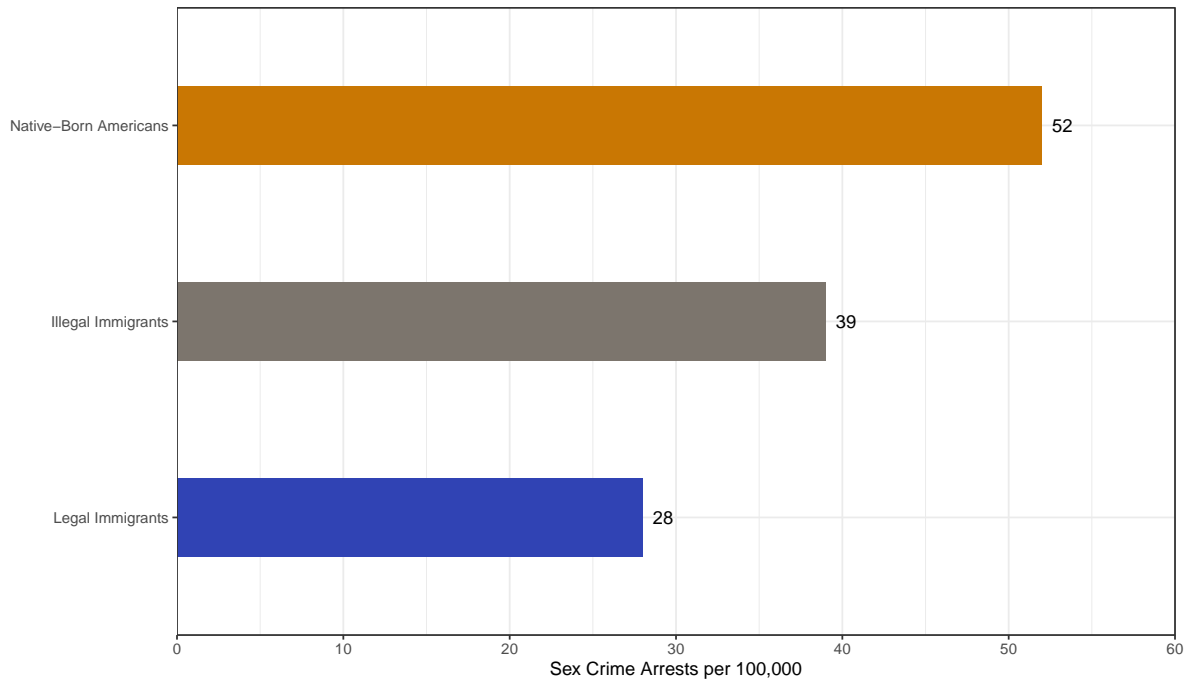


Figure 11. Texas Conviction Rate Over Time

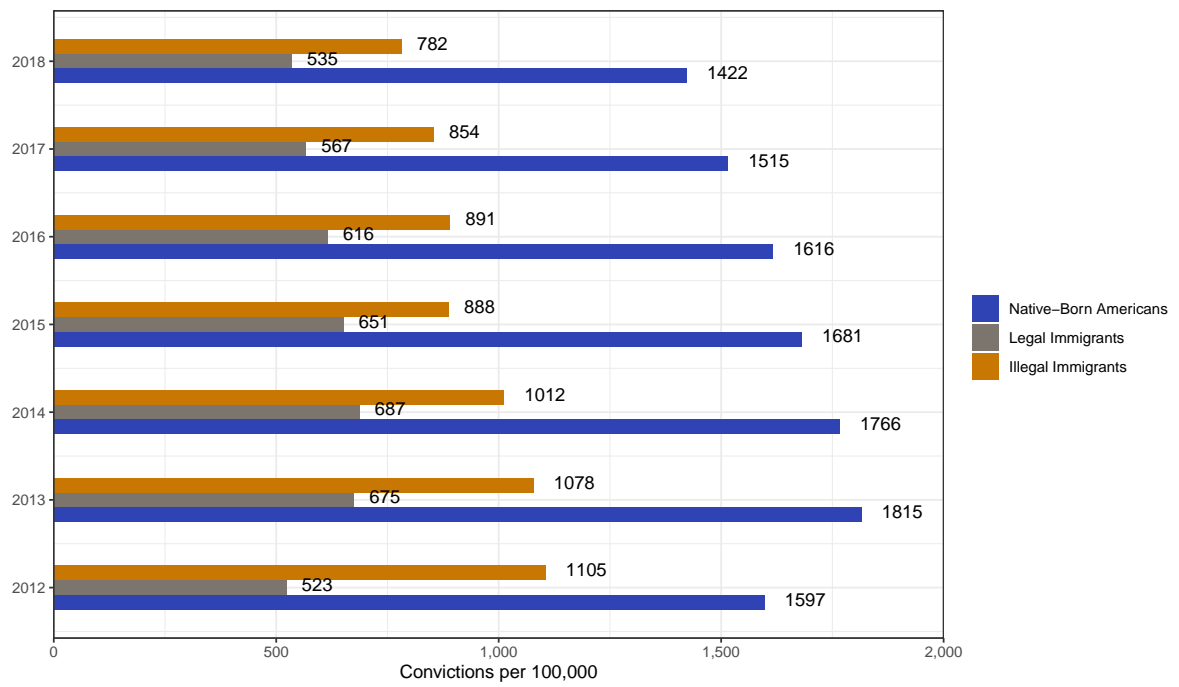
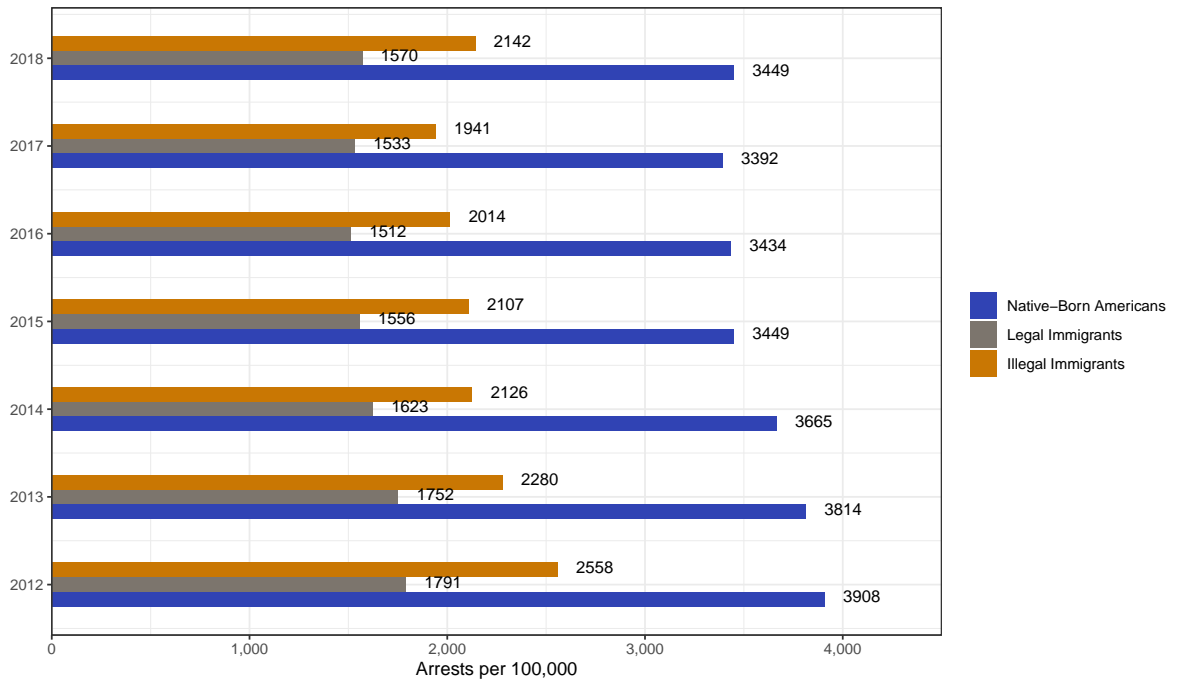


Figure 12. Texas Arrest Rate Over Time



**Figure 13. Illegal Immigrant Populations and Convictions**

Table presents the estimated elasticity of each crime rate listed in column headers and the illegal immigrant population share. The dependent variable is the natural log of each count plus one to avoid zeroes. Wild cluster bootstrap  $p$ -values are shown in parenthesis and their associated 95 percent confidence intervals in brackets. Significance levels are coded \*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$ .

	<i>All Crime</i>		Murder		<i>Violent Crime</i>		Property Crime	
	Total (1)	Illegal (2)	Total (3)	Illegal (4)	Total (5)	Illegal (6)	Total (7)	Illegal (8)
Log Illegal	-0.06805 (0.082)	-0.049 (0.764)	0.043 (0.486)	-0.005 (0.846)	-0.104* (0.018)	-0.071 (0.632)	-0.052 (0.238)	-0.117 (0.454)
Log Population	[-0.147, 0.011] 1.749*** (0.002)	[-0.515, 0.416] 4.219* (0.018)	[-0.075, 0.161] -0.864 (0.600)	[-0.068, 0.058] -0.482 (0.466)	[-0.192, 0.016] 2.443** (0.006)	[-0.436, 0.293] 3.647* (0.018)	[-0.143, 0.039] 1.432*** (0.000)	[-0.484, 0.251] 3.522* (0.018)
Log Cops per 100 (t-1)	[0.842, 2.655] -0.034 (0.196)	[0.546, 7.893] 0.04 (0.792)	[-4.110, 2.381] 0.114 (0.260)	[-1.800, 0.835] 0.044 (0.166)	[0.770, 4.117] -0.108 (0.294)	[0.594, 6.701] 0.023 (0.848)	[0.604, 2.260] -0.003 (0.866)	[0.495, 6.550] 0.050 (0.662)
Observations	228	228	228	228	228	228	228	228
R2	0.153	0.042	0.004	0.005	0.218	0.049	0.085	0.057

**Figure 14. Nationwide Incarceration Rate Over Time**

