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## **Crime and Immigration Illegality**

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The current stalemate in Washington, and the related partisan bickering, are producing no shortage of nefarious talking points.

From the idea that today's border situation mirrors the Ellis Island of a century ago to the bizarre declaration that walls and fences are wholly antithetical concepts, our immigration conversation is polluted with plenty of strange fiction.

But perhaps the most ridiculous assertion, namely that illegal immigrants commit fewer crimes than U.S. citizens, is also one of the most persistent.

It's a claim so commonplace that its parroting spans the ideological spectrum, from to leading libertarian publication Reason to perhaps the most liberal member of Congress, Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez.

Considering we don't even know how many illegal immigrants reside in the United States (estimates range from around 11 million to nearly 30 million), calculating the sum total of their criminal activity seems like a stretch.

And much, if not most, crime is intraracial, meaning crimes by Hispanic perpetrators often go unreported by Hispanic victims for fear of deportation. This is, after all, the logic behind our so-called sanctuary cities, which may make those here illegally feel safer but introduce real dangers to American citizens.

But perhaps the most glaring hole in the entire Swiss cheese-like narrative is the fact that most analyses rely on data from the FBI. On the surface such an approach seems logical, but federal data is compiled from reports by local law enforcement agencies, many of which fail to cite the offenders' nationalities in their statistics.

None of these blinding fallacies, however, have prevented the open borders crowd from performing all manner of mental gymnastics in an effort to convince the public that those here illegally are merely undocumented saints.

Because the data are so sparse, they can be easily manipulated. And today's journalists are either liberal co-conspirators or horrible at parsing statistics.

Exhibit A is "Two charts demolish the notion that immigrants here illegally commit more crime," courtesy of the *Washington Post*'s Wonkblog.

The first chart that does nothing to demolish anything was produced by the Cato Institute, a leading libertarian think tank and a vociferous defender of the rights of illegal immigrants to ignore American sovereignty. Its conclusions, namely that illegal immigrants have lower arrest and conviction rates as a percentage of population, are based on a single year of data (2015) from Texas alone. It doesn't take a MENSA membership to realize these low rates are likely due to the Lone Star State's proximity to Mexico, which affords uncaught criminals and those on the run the opportunity to escape across the porous border. Considering that 37 percent of illegals fail to appear for their immigration hearings, it's safe to assume an even greater number fail to appear for criminal hearings.

The second chart is based on an academic paper that examines violent crime rates in areas with significant populations of illegal immigrants, *by state*. That last part is critical, as the population of illegal immigrants in any given state will be relatively small compared to the native-born population. In other words, other factors outside of the illegal population are the primary drivers of a state's crime statistics. A more accurate analysis, of course, would examine crime rates in certain neighborhoods (to be fair, the researchers do account for "urbanization," though that metric likely still lacks the necessary precision).

But perhaps the most egregious example of dubious data can be found in the nation's most iconic newspaper.

The *New York Times*'s "The Myth of the Criminal Immigrant" revolves around a study that examines all immigration, legal and illegal, and the resultant crime rates to make the case that immigrants commit fewer crimes in comparison to the native-born population. As if the average Trump supporter is worried about those who have paid thousands of dollars, taken countless exams, and been thoroughly vetted by the government in their years-long efforts to acquire citizenship.

It's long been established that *legal* immigrants commit very little crime, and the Gray Lady's attempt to merge the numbers to benefit those here illegally is indicative of the disingenuous nature of coverage of the issue in general. It should come as no surprise that both the *Times* article and the study it cites open with quotes by Donald Trump that reference the dangers of *illegal* immigration.

Countless other examples abound, all of which employ various statistical sleights-of-hand to skew the narrative in their favor. But the truth is that illegal immigrants are simply human like the rest of us — most are good, but plenty are bad.

Crime has long been linked with poverty, and today's migrants are largely coming from the poorest countries in the Western Hemisphere. It's doubtful they are the sole population on Earth to buck this long-established correlation.

And none of this implies that illegal immigrants commit more crimes either. But considering that one-third of women who make the journey to the U.S. from Mexico and Central America are sexually assaulted and that one-in-five federal inmates are "criminal aliens," the idea that illegals possess some magical predisposition for peace is laughable at least and, at worst, a little racist.

If the open borders crowd insists on playing the "humanity" card, they should treat the migrants they claim to be defending as the humans they are.

