

INTRO

Created in 2002 under the Homeland Security Act, the United States Immigrations and Customs Enforcement (ICE) is a federal agency which claims to enforce immigration laws for the sake of national security and public safety (I.C.E, *Mission*). From 2009-2016, 2.4 million undocumented immigrants were deported by ICE (American Immigration Council, 2017). As calls for the abolition of ICE began to grow, Trump took office, and in his first term (2016-2020) substantially grew the agency while espousing hardline immigration policy. At time of writing, during Trump's second term in office, ICE has recently seen vast budget increases and the removal of many regulations, as well as overall increases to the extent of its power. In 2025, ICE has notably been used against activist Mahmoud Khalil in politically-motivated displays, and President Trump has threatened similar actions to come. [expand: citations, specific quotes by Trump on Khalil, discuss policy permitting racial profiling, cultures of fear + impact on communities]

This paper is intrinsically politically motivated, and is written largely in response to the broadening of ICE's scope & license. We do not intend to display impartiality, nor do we intend to debate the quality of ICE – we firmly hold that it is an expressly cruel institution, and that calling for anything short of abolition would be unsatisfactory. We do not seek to ever-further discuss *why* ICE is so damaging, but instead to focus on how it operates, with the hope that this may give an indication for avenues of resistance and change. By focusing on how encounters with ICE are created, how at-risk groups are targeted, and how ICE behavior correlates with various political, temporal, & geographical patterns, we hope to give credence to various policy recommendations, as well as suggest direct-action approaches to community support and protection. To this end, we will focus on three main factors: (1) descriptive statistics regarding ICE arrests by State & presidential administration [todo: legislative changes & time of day]; (2) the relationship between criminal charges, ethnicity, and deportation; and (3) the quality of deportations. We expect to find that border states & republican administrations correlate with more intense or active ICE presence. Given that a large amount of immigration to the USA comes from Mexico, we expect that arrest data

will skew towards Hispanic individuals. Additionally, we expect that a number of deportations will come from individuals already incarcerated, or who have at least come in contact with the criminal justice system (CJS), simply because this means that individuals will be more likely to come into contact with peripheral agencies such as ICE. We do not have specific expectations for ICE arrests by time of day, nor for quality of deportations, as these are more areas of interest that could be relevant to building systems of community defense.

An Interlude on Form

Academia is largely regarded as plagued by inaccessibility (Spiegel, 2025). Among the innumerable structural ways that disciplines limit participation to the isolated upper-class (among others), one of the easiest to observe and address lies in the form in which it is presented: the art of writing. Between argot jargon, gratuitous *ad-hoc* appropriations of latin & french, and innumerable sesquipedalian terminological deployments, the shibboleths of academia are firmly entrenched in its formal registers. To counter this compositional calamity, this work will contend a contrastively codified constitution: normal intelligible language.

DATA

The *Deportation Data Project* is a group that publishes individualized data on USA immigration, including years-long datasets from CBP, ICE, EOIR, and EOUSA. Most of the published data comes from Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests, including the datasets we used. Our dataset is a compilation of various releases regarding ICE arrests published by the *Deportation Data Project* between October 2011 until July 2025, which we then normalized & narrowed the scope of to only variables likely to be relevant during our analysis. Many variables (most notably: apprehension state, departure country, ethnicity, race, apprehension criminality, & worst criminal charge) only start being tracked in 2015, which limits the scope of primarily demographic analytics.

As our dataset was a compilation from multiple non-normalized releases, the cleaning process began by manually going through each dataset & mapping which category names had the same referents, as often the same variable would exist under a very different header, or one dataset would have multiple similar headers that could all plausibly map to a single header in a future dataset at first glance. Once all column names had been matched, all files were imported into Jupyter notebook & merged. Variables that pertained only to specific years (such as “case_category”) were dropped, as were redundant or irrelevant columns. All rows tagged with “Duplicate Likely” (A flag raised when the time & location of an arrest exactly matched, or when two cases shared a unique identifier) were dropped. This flag only existed within the 2023-2025 dataset, and resulted in approximately 6000 entries being dropped. After discarding duplicates, the final dataset came in at approximately 1.7 million entries.

To format this data for easy processing, the apprehension year was extracted from the overall date & granted its own column. Dates were reformatted as python datetime objects rather than strings (if no time of day was listed, it defaulted to 12:00am). Below is a table of the most relevant variables to our analysis & the timescales that they work on.

App. Year	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015-2023	2024	2025
App. Date Time							

App. Method							
App. Site Landmark							
App. State							
Birth Year							
Citizenship Country							
Departed date							
Departure Country							
Ethnicity							
Gender							
Race							
Worst Criminal Charge							

To aid in the creation of some descriptive statistics, we also created a version of this dataset that aggregated the data for each day, and output an activity-by-day description of arrests and deportations. This more targeted dataset contained the daily arrests, deportations, deportations to citizenship country, and deportations elsewhere, as well as the ratio of deportations citizenship country against deportations elsewhere.

METHODS

Regarding administration analysis, we primarily focused on providing descriptive statistics rather than using overly complex models. As a primary aim of this limb of the project was to observe if there seemed *at all* to be a relationship between ICE activity and presidential administrations or states, knowing preexisting discourses around whether or not immigration policy was worse under republican governments or not, regression seemed excessive. For this question, all data was organized by week. By graphing how citizenship country impacts arrest under different administrations, large discrepancies indicate potential nuances to this discussion, even as the overall trends in arrests seems less to show a worsening by administration rather than an upwards time *in general*. When it comes to deportations by state, a similar approach of simple graphing was sufficient to interrogate our hypothesis, as the resulting discrepancies in arrests were great enough to not require further analyses. The same tactic was also employed for the same reasons when it came to demographical analysis on the basis of gender, ethnicity, and race.

To our second focus – that of criminality, ethnicity, and deportation – a slightly different approach was required. “Criminality” here is understood not in the sense of *conviction*, but in the much broader sense of contact with the criminal justice system. For this purpose, the “Worst Criminal Charge” variable was a primary focus. This was unfortunately non-normalized across or within years, and likely reflects a great amount of individual discretion when recording information. To make this a processable form, at many points a selection of keyword substrings were used to group the data into overlapping subsets (i.e. double counting was permitted), such that approximate comparisons could be conducted at the cost of precision. Criminal charges were grouped into 8 categories: Drug Charges, Traffic (Driving-related) Charges, Violent Charges (only violence against individuals; not counting property crime or drug offenses), Monetary Charges (relating to gambling, fraud, or theft), Immigration Charges, Sex-Crime Charges, Legal Charges (relating to obstruction of justice, failure to appear in court, or other failures to interact with the CJS), and Other Charges that could not be placed into any of the above categories. Of these, Drug & Traffic charges were the most frequent. Subsequent keyword analysis within each category was then conducted: Drug Charges were grouped into Intoxicated Driving, Possession,

Distribution, Transporting, Manufacturing, & Other. Traffic Charges were grouped into Intoxicated Driving, Traffic Stops, Car-Related Theft, and Other.

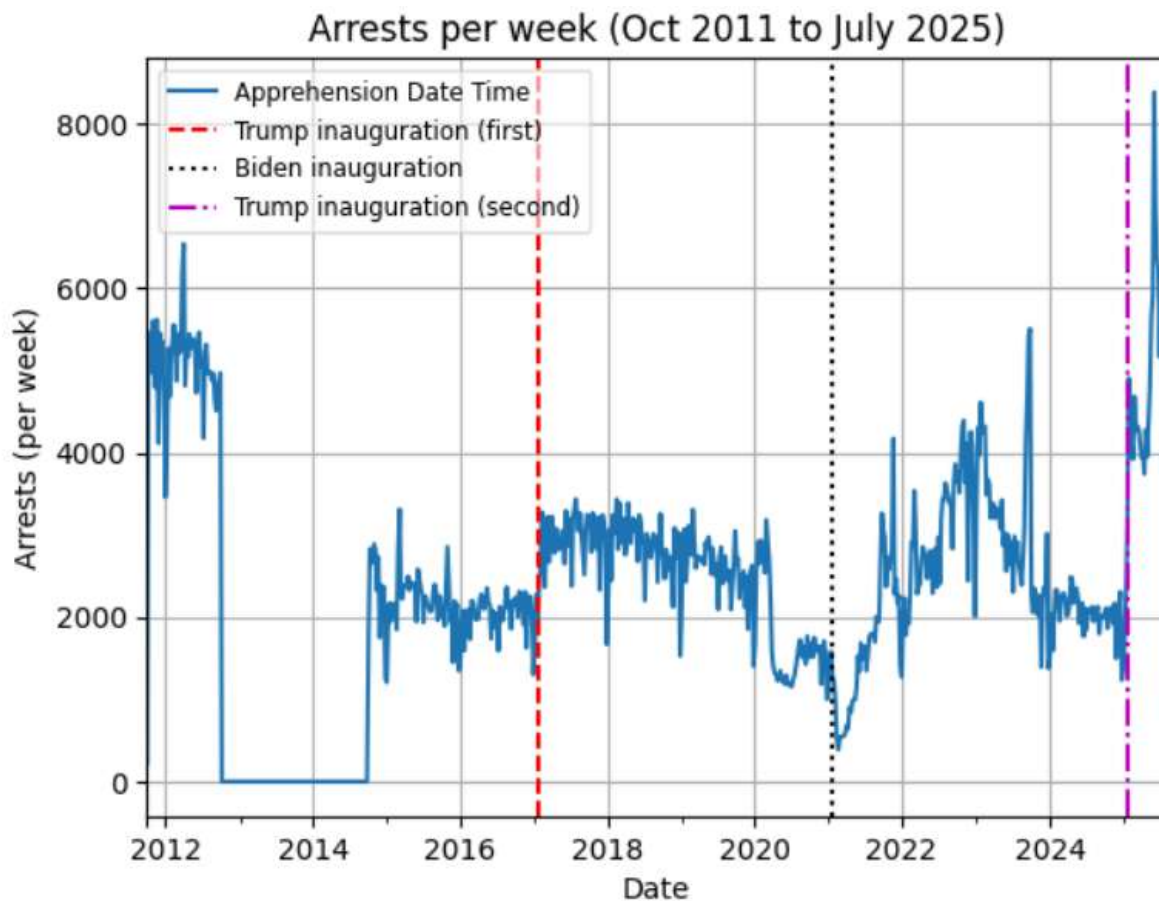
When observing demographic trends within pre-criminalized arrestees, a focus on the Hispanic flag & the Deported flag was undertaken utilizing logistic regression to better elucidate what groups are most at-risk, with the hope of indicating areas of focus for community and legislative actions.

Finally, [TODO: ian's methodology on deportations]

FINDINGS

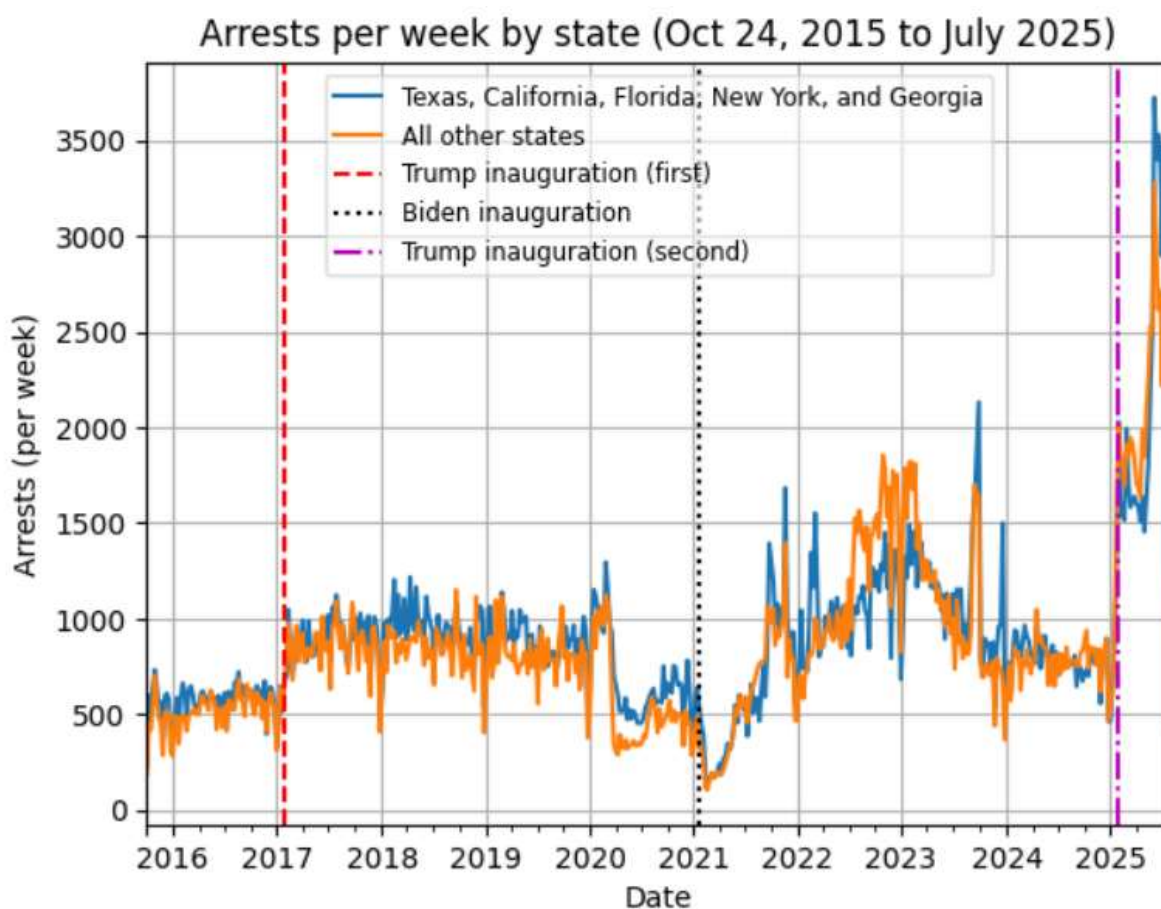
Administration Analysis

Presidential administration appears to have a bearing on immigration, but the party of the administration seems less relevant.



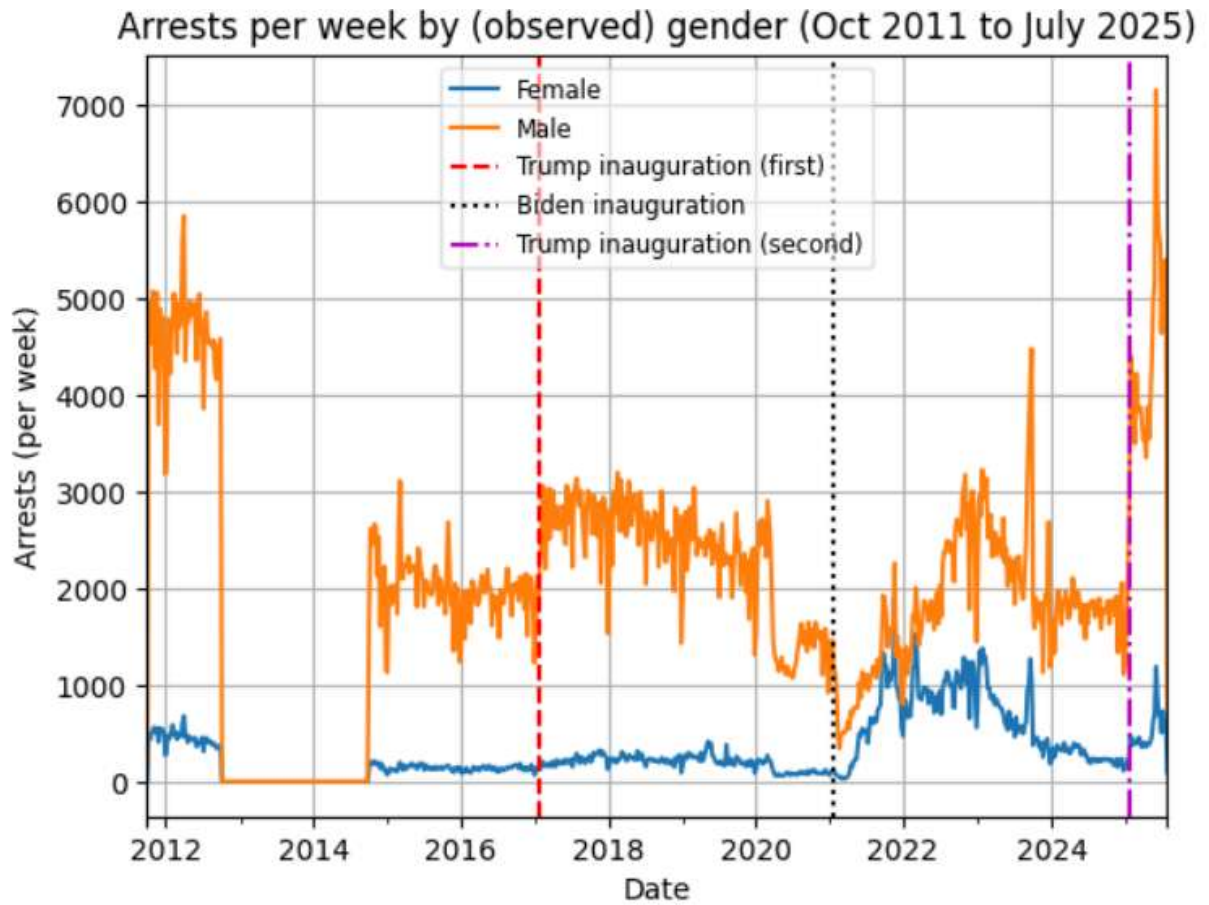
The spike following Trump's second inauguration is fairly anticipated given recent policy decisions, but the greater spikes during the Biden administration seem to show less consistent – but similar intensity – ICE behavior. State – not administration – seems a much stronger predictor of ICE activity: The top 5 states for ICE activity (Texas, California, Florida, New York, Georgia) near-exactly match all other

states combined for arrests:

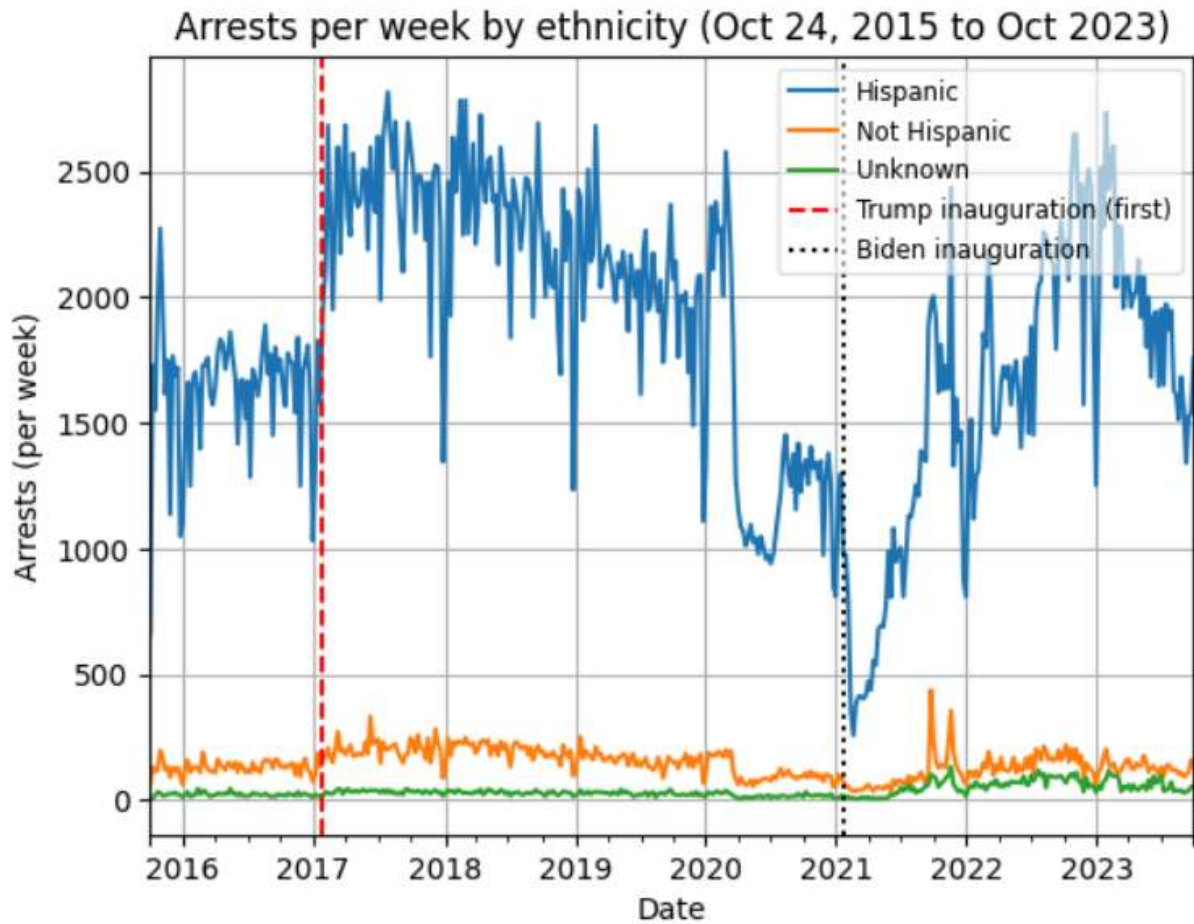


These areas generally make some level of sense – Texas is a border state, highly republican, and is the biggest hub of ICE activity in the nation – at triple the arrests of the runner-up (California), its hard-on-immigration reputation is upheld. Florida & Georgia follow for similar reasons. California & New York may come as a surprise to some as blue states, but as was indicated with administration, immigration policy seems to not be quite so partisan.

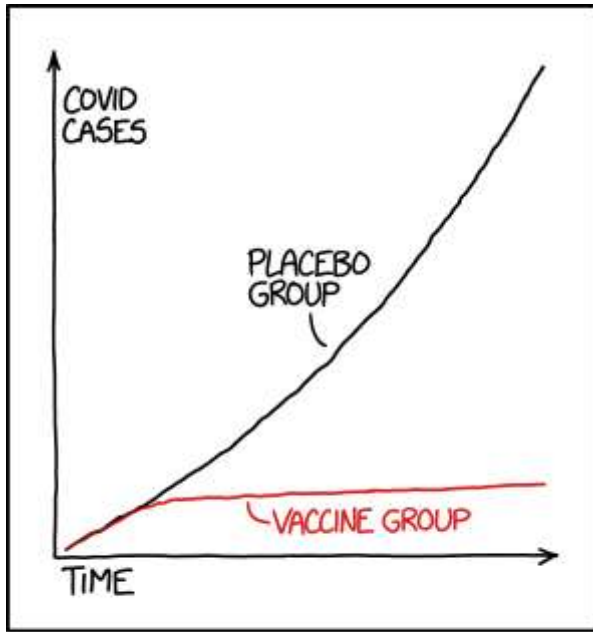
When it comes to demographics, some oft-reported claims are easily validated: Men are much more likely to be arrested than women



and hispanic people make up the vast majority of ICE arrests



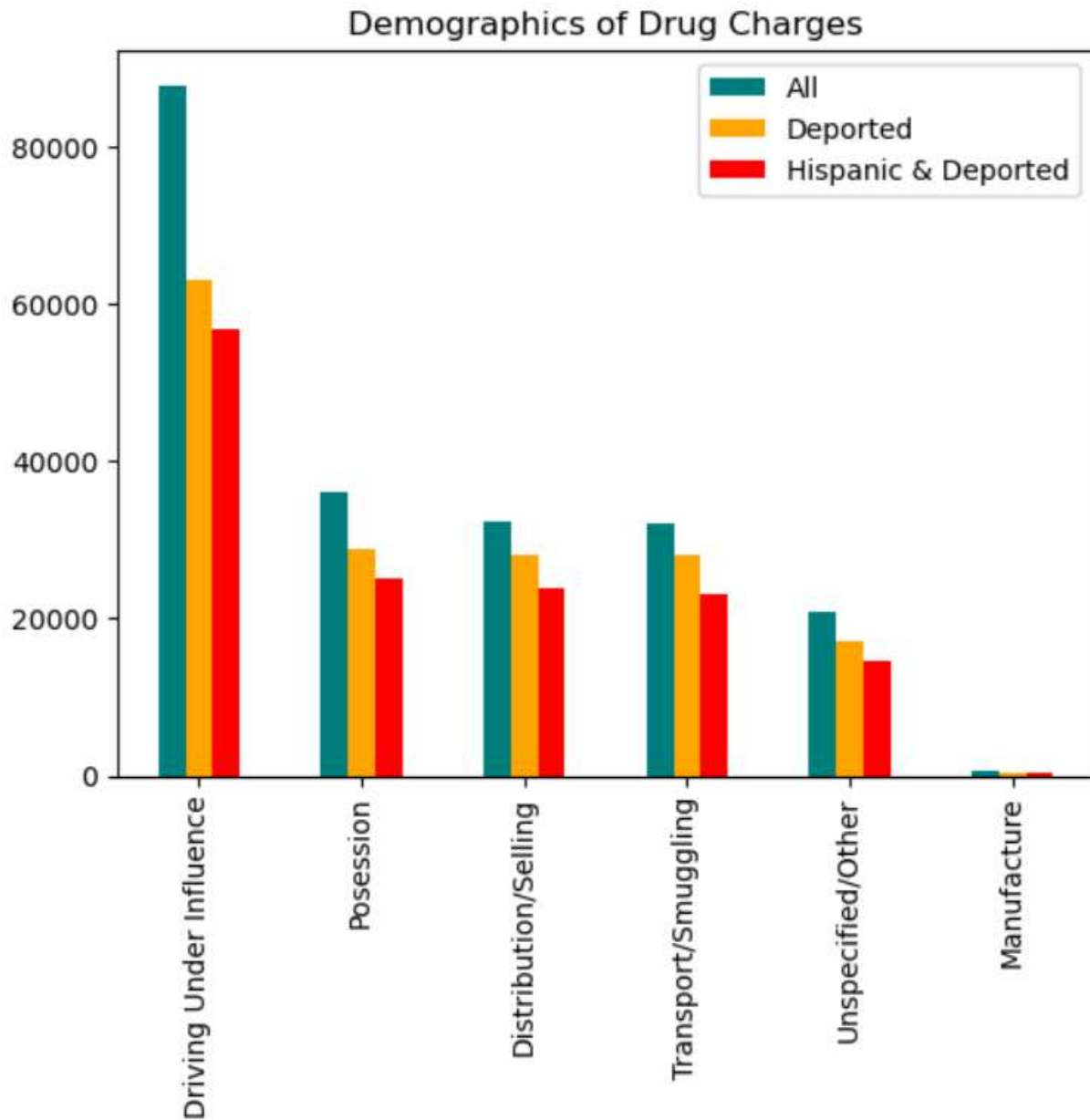
The wonder of such discrepancies is that the data is clear enough to not need to do statistics on it!



STATISTICS TIP: ALWAYS TRY TO GET DATA THAT'S GOOD ENOUGH THAT YOU DON'T NEED TO DO STATISTICS ON IT

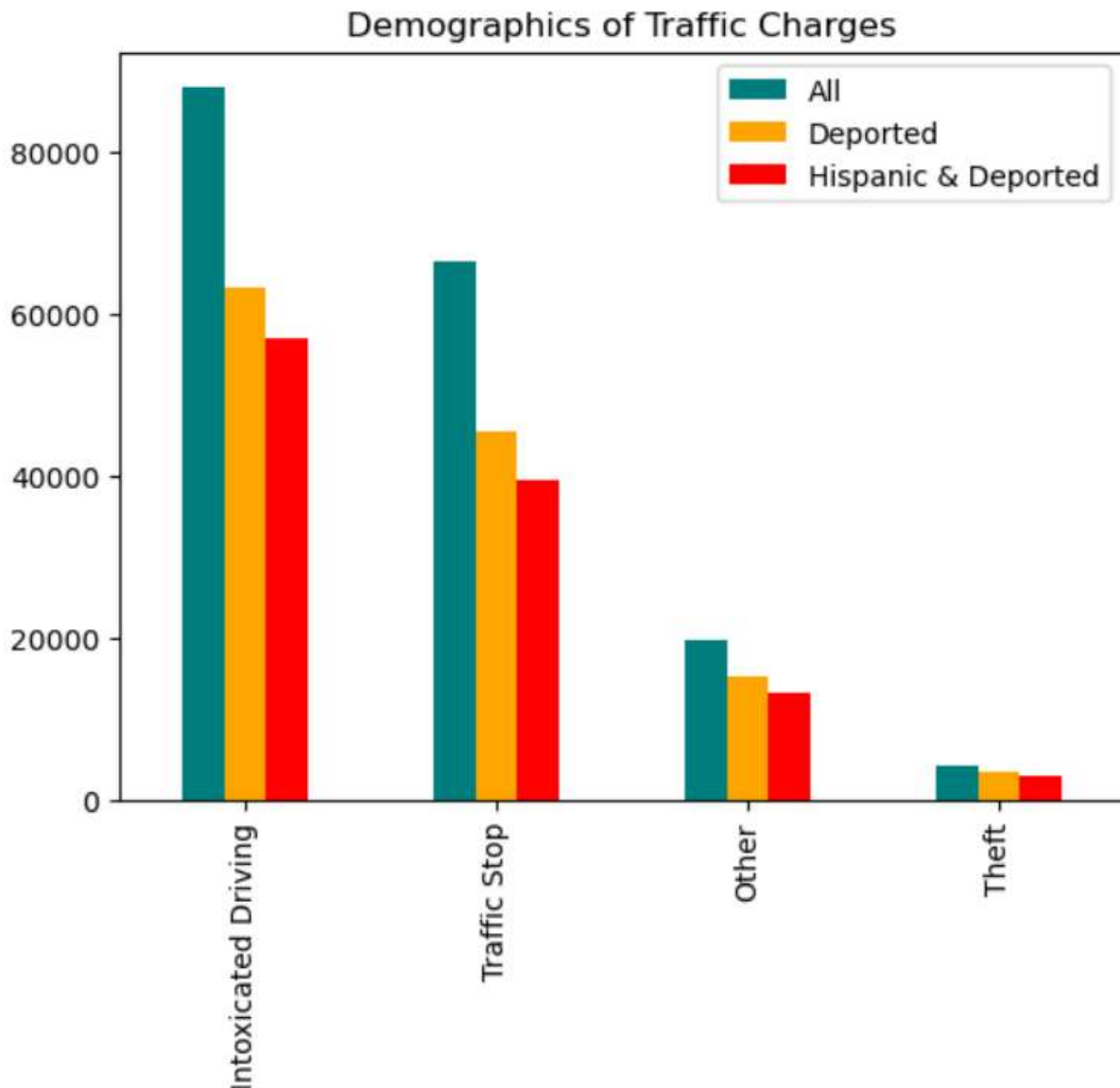
Criminality & Ethnicity

After sorting criminal charges into a couple general buckets, the top two types of charges appear to be drug charges & traffic charges. First tackling drug charges, some quick graphing corroborates the Administration Analysis' findings regarding the Hispanic-dominated demographics.



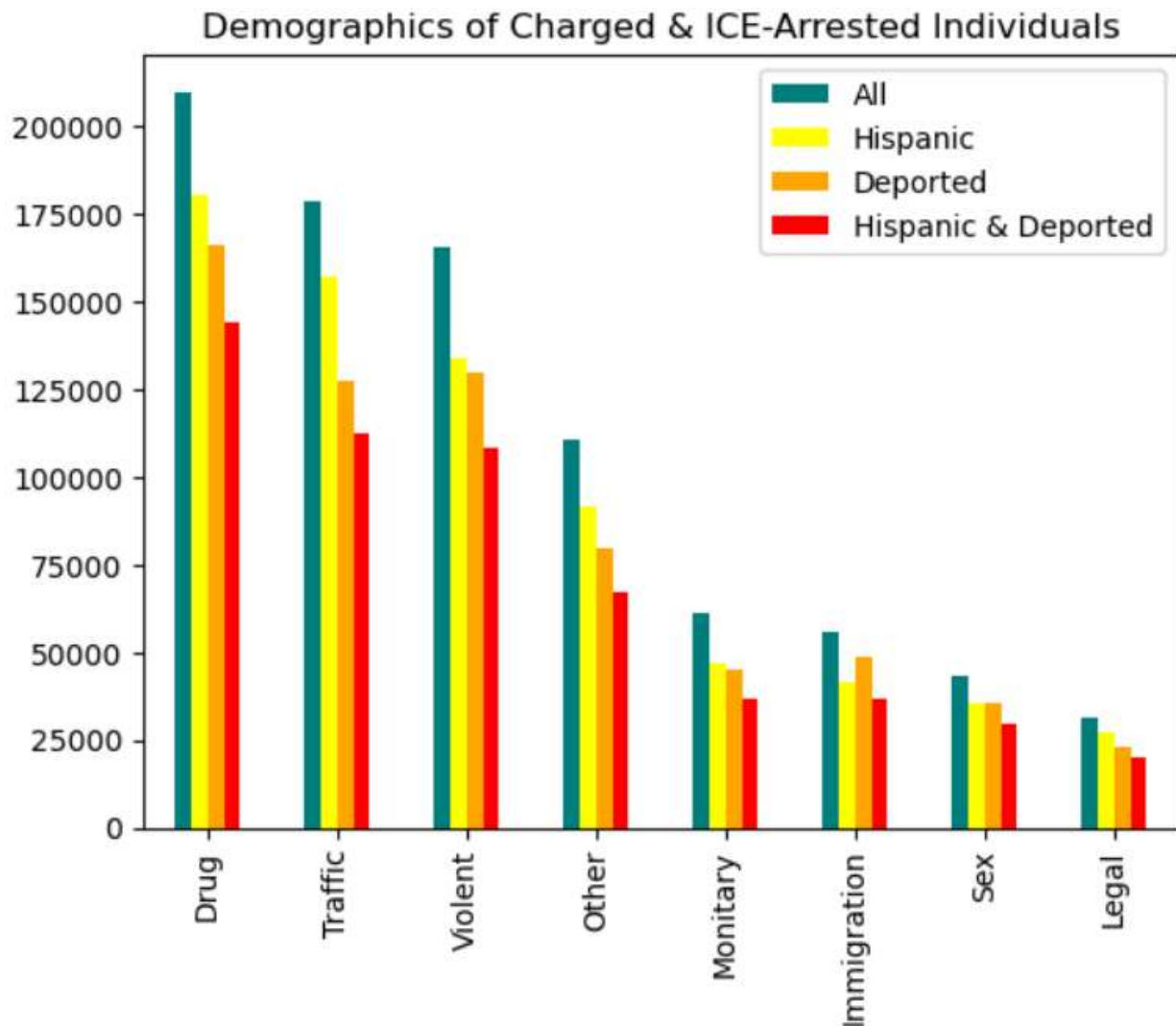
Additionally, by far the most common drug-related charge is driving under the influence (at over double the runner-up). It is then

expectedly high among traffic charges, also at number one:



Notable is also the runner-up of traffic stops: corroborating other analyses of the CJS and profiling, traffic stops are generally known to be a source of immense police discretion and the primary point of contact with the CJS that most people have. Often regarded as an entry-point, traffic stops are one of many factors that contribute to mass incarceration (Fogel & Evans 2025). That they show up as a primary charge here is noteworthy especially considering that the greatest single charge is intoxicated driving – a charge levied *from a traffic stop*, and which is very often a mischarge (Reina Dindial & Berkowitz, 2025).

Looking at the overall trends within charged arrestees, deportation appears incredibly high:



which serves as a strong indicator that the correlation between ethnicity, criminality, & ICE arrests should be further investigated. Running a basic logistic regression with Ethnicity & Criminality as the only predictors of deportation within the entire dataset, a trained model held a Mean Squared Error of 0.228 – indicating that these are generally quite strong predictors of whether or not an arrested individual will be deported. Furthermore, a short keyword-match across *Apprehension Site Landmark* demonstrates that approximately 25% of all ICE arrests are made from prisons. All of this together indicates that contact with the CJS is a major source of risk for undocumented individuals. Expectedly, ICE operates such that

people who are already affected by precarity have that status only further entrenched.

Deportation Quality

[ian findings]

DISCUSSION [needs much expansion]

These findings have significant implications regarding individual and legislative avenues for positive change. At the legislative level, it appears that immigration policy has largely been bipartisan in implementation. This would indicate that achievable legislation that could have positive impacts in the near future may need to target non-evidently immigration-related topics, such as policy that reduces contact with municipal police and the CJS more broadly. One evident point of attack would be traffic stops, which would entail regulation and restriction on the capabilities of police to profile or use discretion when pulling over individuals.

When it comes to avenues for direct action, there are many possible routes that individual communities may take. Programs that keep people out of the CJS may be helpful, but that still leaves ~75% of ICE arrests to continue. Possible work may include response networks that enable low-risk individuals to get in the way of officers & use up their time, the documentation of ICE behavior, and the connection of arrestees with legal & social resources. Moments where ICE activity may be heightened – such as at a protest – may benefit from individuals on an “ICE watch”, who can sound an alarm if cars identified as ICE are nearby.

limitations to interpretation of findings

mostly descriptive stats, not very precise

limitations of the methods we used

descriptive stats, mostly goes into what and not why

we're only observing correlations for the most part

this doesn't help us with longer term reform

limitations of source data to begin with

quality of data, self-reporting, ICE hesitancy to release

& how individuals categorize things differently

terms like “traffic offense” are arbitrary

data is not necessarily from trustworthy reporters

broader contexts & info about ongoing work

connect with other research

tangential positive work that has good impacts for this

ICE watch & recognition guides, resources for resistance

do not talk about ways communities resist ICE right now

safety reasons

discussion of where to go now & recommendations for action

direct action, ways individuals can get involved

eg: don't fight officers → makes things worse

how to recognize vehicles

how to take up an officer's time

knowledge/know your rights distribution

longer term discussion

reformism → which modern policies are especially bad

abolition → but ICE has been bad since before those

what did the USA do before ICE

ICE was a response to 9/11

you don't need open borders to abolish ICE

though that's also rad

References

- American Immigration Council. (January 4, 2017). *Lessons to be Found in DHS' 2016 immigration enforcement numbers*.
<https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/blog/deportation-numbers-2016/>
- Fogel, E. & Evans, K. (2025). The Road to Slow Deportation, *Duke Law Journal*, 74. 1389-1439.
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