

Introduction:

Since the creation of our nation, immigrants have been perceived to increase the country's crime rate. Within the last few Presidential election cycles, this perception has persisted. Republicans have called for stricter immigration laws and Democrats have spearheaded the movement for more American sanctuary cities.

Negative perceptions of immigrants and crime can lead to severe division in a society. This increasing tension led me to conduct a study to discover what variables have the largest impact on political attitudes toward whether immigration status impacts crime rates.

Hypothesis:

In a comparison of individuals, persons who identify as **Republican** are more likely to believe that immigrants raise crime rates compared to those who identify as **Democrat**.

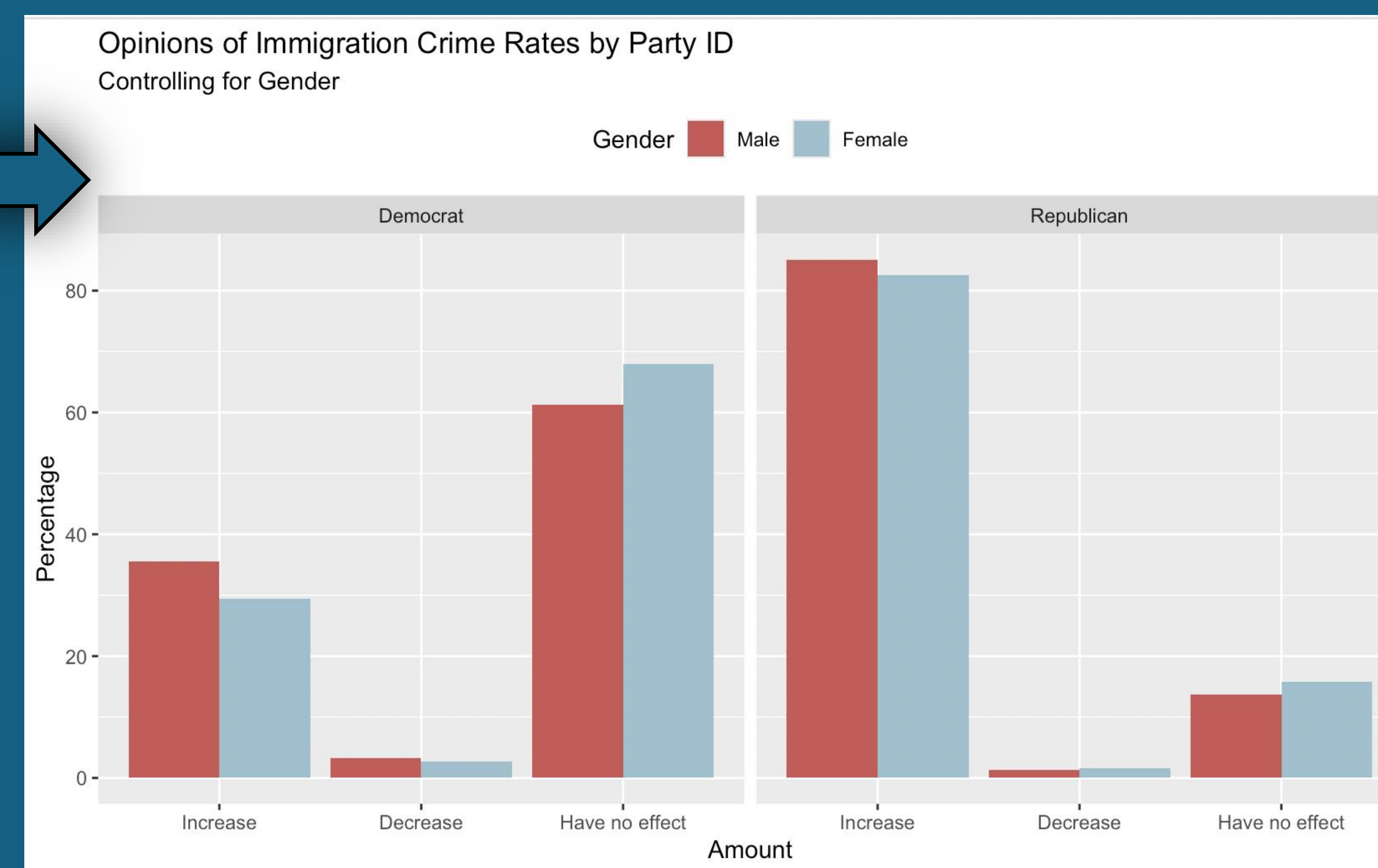
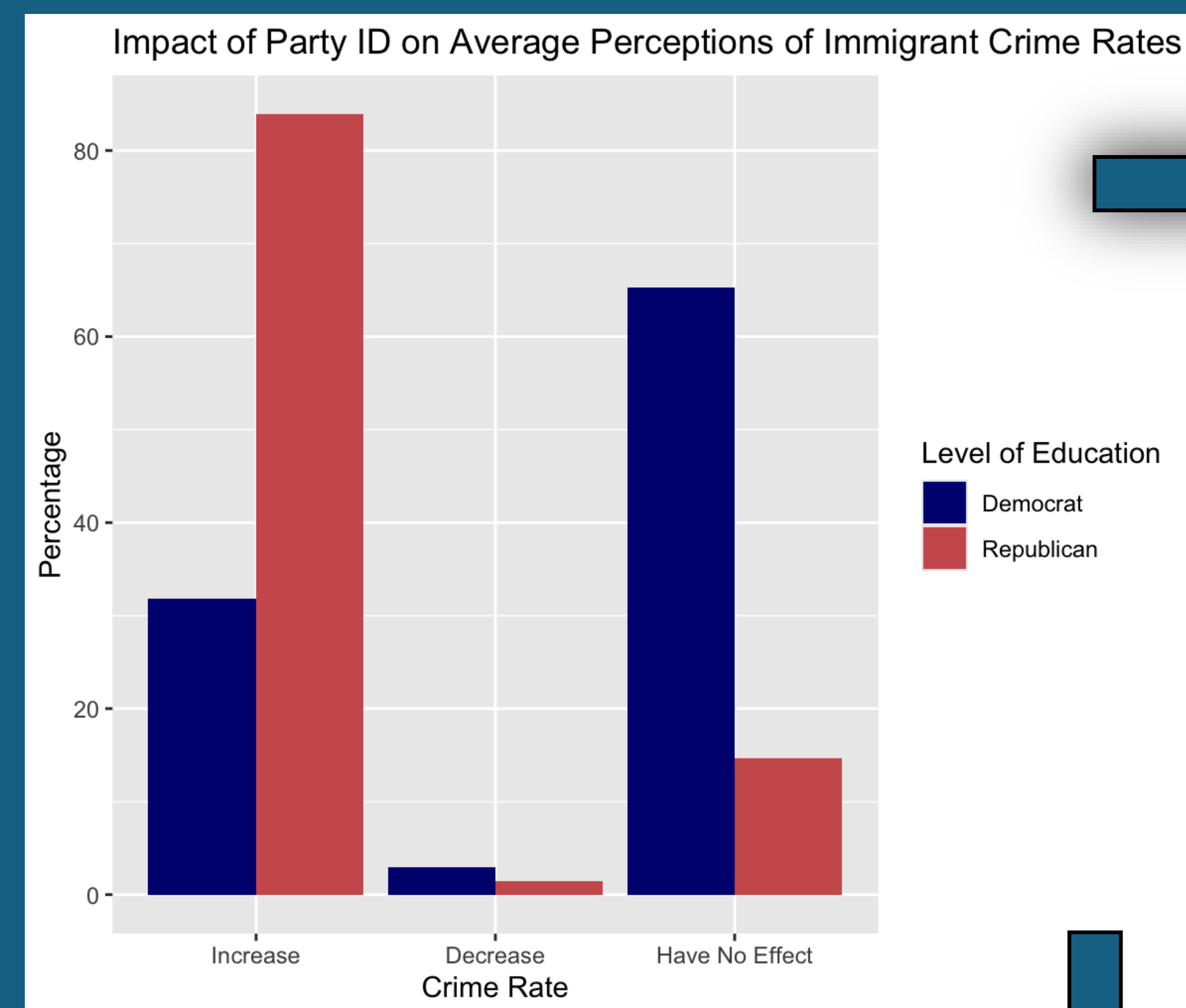
Literature Review:

In his journal *The Dynamics of Immigration Opinion in the United States*, Christopher Muste conducted a study asking individuals in the years 1996 and 2004 if they think immigrants increase crime rates. The results were intriguing, with the majority of respondents declaring that they disagreed with the statement. However, a more recent study conducted by the PEW Research Center derived completely different results. According to the research center, 57% of Americans declared their belief that immigrants do directly negatively impact crime rates.

In his 2009 research, Justin Berg concluded that multiple factors influence someone's opinion on this matter. He hypothesized that key variables such as education level and political attitudes have a large impact. These studies raise questions about drawing comparisons, and what variables truly do have the strongest correlation with opinions.

Variables:

'**Crime Rate**' (the opinions of whether immigration impacts crime rate) was the dependent variable studied. The independent variable in the research was **Party ID** (Democrat or Republican). The multiple control variables consisted of **Level of Education** and **Gender**.



Sources & Methods:

The data utilized in this study was collected from the 2020 ANES dataset, and it was interpreted using RStudio statistical software. RStudio is a tool used to run R, a programming language useful for data analysis, computing statistics, and generating graphics. The methods used for analyzing data consisted of both 2 and 3-way cross-tabulations. Bar charts were computed to visualize the data.

Conclusion:

The findings of this study offer strong correlations between the different variables, which can be interpreted in different ways. For instance, both Gender and Level of Education directly impact an individual's social environment. How individuals socialize is how they form their opinions and identities. In turn, both characteristics can play a huge role in shaping people's perceptions of complex issues.

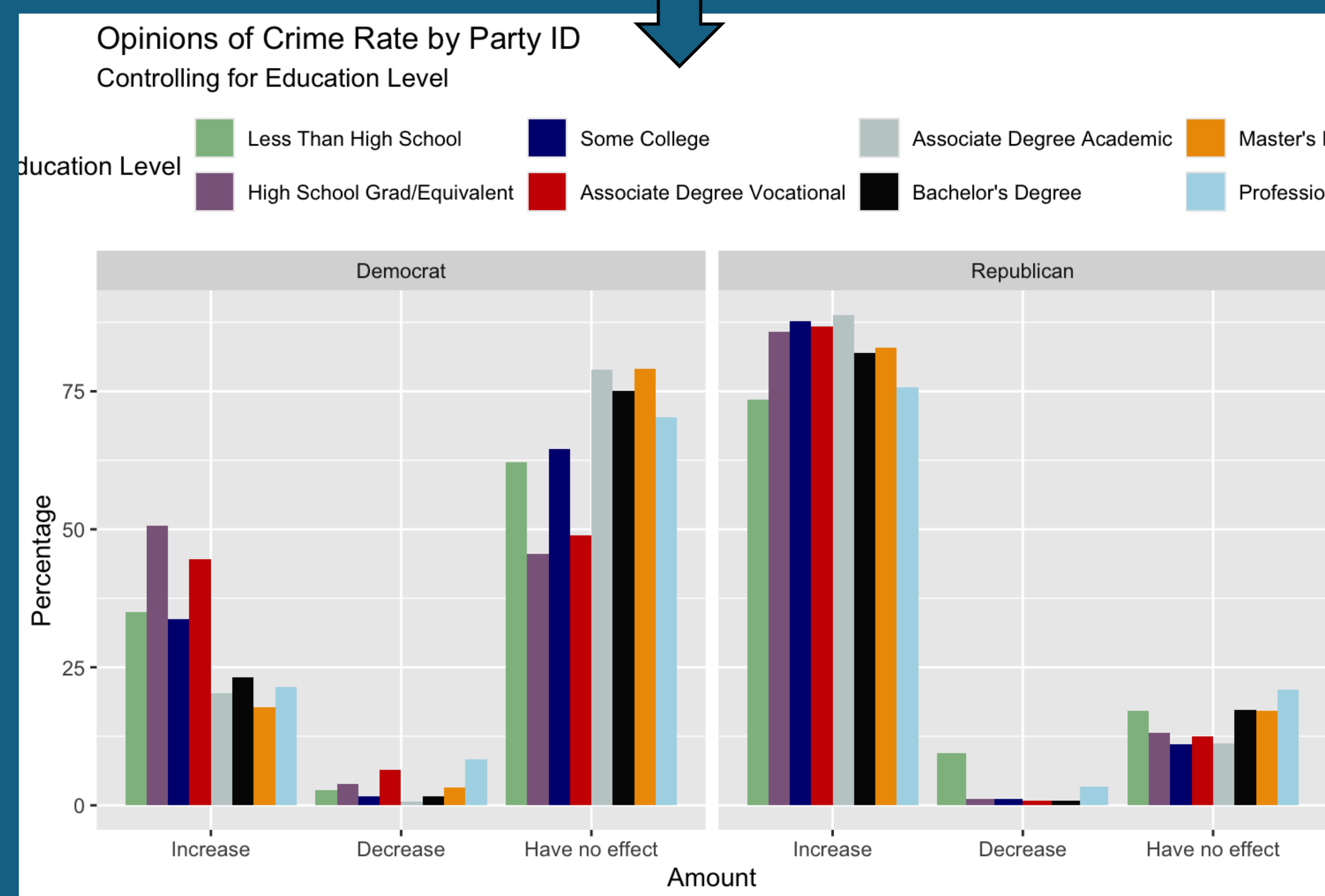
Because public opinion does tend to shift with the different Presidential cycles, it will be interesting to delve more into whether these variables remain the most impactful in future research.

Bibliography:

Christopher P. Muste, *The Dynamics of Immigration Opinion in the United States, 1992–2012*, *Public Opinion Quarterly*, Volume 77, Issue 1, Spring 2013, Pages 398–416, <https://doi.org/10.1093/poq/nft001>

Justin Allen Berg, *Core Networks and Whites' Attitudes Toward Immigrants and Immigration Policy*, *Public Opinion Quarterly*, Volume 73, Issue 1, Spring 2009, Pages 7–31, <https://doi.org/10.1093/poq/nfp011>

U.S.-Mexico Border, Its Causes and Consequences." *Pew Research Center*, 15 February 2024, <https://www.pewresearch.org/politics/2024/02/15/how-americans-view-the-situation-at-the-u-s-mexico-border-its-causes-and-consequences/>. Accessed 15 April 2024.



Data

Analysis

Examining the relationship between the two variables Party ID and opinions resulted in the following observations:

Democrats: 31.8% believe immigrants raise crime rates

Republicans: 83.9% believe immigrants raise crime rates

When cross-examining the relationship between Party ID and Gender, a consistent trend was observed. Males are more likely to believe that immigrants raise crime rates compared to females. This relationship is especially noticeable among Republican males. Moreover, there is a distinct relationship when controlling for Education Level. The data showed that individuals with lower levels of education are more likely to believe that immigrants increase crime rates compared to those with higher levels of education. Much like the relationship observed with Gender, this relationship is also more noticeable with Republican individuals.

Though the research did not establish a definitive causal relationship between the variables, it did display that there are strong correlations to be observed between all of them.